

CHRISTIAN COURIER

A Reformed Biweekly

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AUG 24 1999

August 23, 1999

No. 2619 \$1.60

Secrets of anti-Christian campaign revealed in India

Convert to Christianity says each attack meticulously planned

Alex Buchan

LONDON (Compass) — A Hindu-militant-turned-Christian has revealed details of a hit list of denominational targets compiled by his former organization, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), which has been behind much of India's anti-Christian violence in recent years.

"We targeted those groups mainly involved in evangelism," the convert said. "At the top of the list are the Pentecostals, then come the Brethren and Baptists, then the independent churches among the poorer people-groups." On the bottom of the list were Roman Catholics and Anglicans, he said, "because they were to be infiltrated rather than attacked."

The new convert spoke to Compass from a secret location in Andhra Pradesh because "no one is allowed to leave the RSS and live." An attempt was made in late April to kill the evangelist who brought the convert to the Christian faith.

Traveling on a train, the evangelist was engaged in conversation by two men who were suddenly joined in the compartment by three

other men who all pulled knives on the man. Only the screams of alarm by two others sharing the compartment brought a soldier, who used his stun gun to save the evangelist.

"The RSS is really frightened by the fact that a lot of high caste Hindus are becoming Christian, especially Brahmins, and they are working hand in hand with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to stamp this out," the former militant Hindu said.

An almighty fuss

The former RSS member revealed secret plans, tactics and estimates. The militant group believes there are 21,000 "missionaries" in India. They are most concerned with attacking the Pentecostals, who "not only make converts but make such an almighty fuss about it." Next on the list were Brethren and Baptist denominations, also extremely evangelistic, though more low key in their methods.

Slain Australian missionary Graham Staines belonged to a

See STRONG page 2...



The Ganges River. Many members of RSS, a militant Hindu group, want the Gangetic plain to contain only Hindus, and want all other religious adherents pushed out.

The Lord's Prayer, Bible readings banned in Saskatchewan schools

Alan Doerksen

SASKATOON, Sask. — The Lord's Prayer and Bible readings will no longer be allowed in Saskatchewan's public schools, says a July 23 decision by the province's Human Rights Commission. Some local Christians — but not all — want the decision appealed. The decision came after a group of parents in Saskatoon protested that their children were being ostracized by the way the prayer and Scripture readings were used.

Unlike most other provinces, when Saskatchewan became a province it was specifically granted a constitutional right to allow the Lord's Prayer and Bible readings in its public schools. But the Human Rights Commission claimed the Saskatoon public board of education's use of these were in violation of the Constitution.

Starting in 1993, Rosanna and Jeff Langer, Jewish parents of two school-aged children, banded together with seven other concerned

parents — Christian, Muslim and atheist — to launch a complaint against the Saskatoon School Board. They told the Human Rights Commission that their "children attending the public school system do not enjoy the right to freedom of conscience, opinion and belief" and were being "discriminated against because of their creed and religion."

They asserted that the current Saskatoon board of education's policy "encourages and supports Bible readings and the use of the Lord's Prayer in classrooms," which is religious discrimination forbidden by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code.

Several students testified at the inquiry, including Emma Langer, 11, daughter of Rosanna and Jeff Langer. According to her testimony, reported by Board of Inquiry judge Ken Halvorson, Emma's typical Grade 2 school day would start with attendance, recitation of the Lord's Prayer, and singing of the national anthem.

Emma would sit down during the prayer (while others stood) because she was given no other option. Once, a substitute teacher asked her why she was not standing like the others.

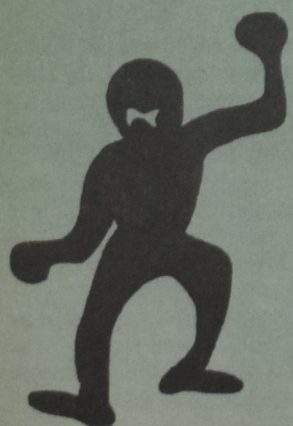
At school assemblies, the Lord's Prayer was also recited. Emma would stand for the prayer but not bow her head. The girl told the board of inquiry that it was "not right ... to exclude some groups.... They would be looked down on."

'Problematic'

Rebecca von Baeyer Lake, a 17-year-old member of the Unitarian Church, also testified about her negative school experiences. According to Halvorson's written decision, "In Grade 3, she was a member of a group of pupils which met with the principal to request that the Lord's Prayer cease at assemblies, but nothing changed; the principal informed the group that a majority [of the students were] Christian."

See SASKATCHEWAN p. 2...

"Be angry and sin not" Controlling our anger



Mirth Vos: *Working out our salvation with the strong energy of anger* (p. 10)

Diane Klein: *Dissecting the "anger response"* (p. 13)

Jay Reay: *A tongue-in-cheek look at how we'd like to respond to life's slings and arrows* (p. 12)

Bibliography: *A few helpful resources* (p. 14)

News

Strong reaction against Hindu extremists in India

... continued from page 1

Brethren mission, the Evangelical Missionary Society, and had a low-key but effective ministry among leprosy sufferers. Staines would have been under observation for months, revealed the former RSS worker, who was not involved in the murder planning. Staines and his two young sons were burned to death on January 23 of this year.

Each attack on a Christian is meticulously planned, with codes worked out, and often sent over the Internet. One unit specializes in the interception of e-mail.

As for the Staines killing, the convert says, "They picked the night carefully - it was the night when the local tribal village was having [its] annual festival to the

gods, where they dance in order to secure divine protection for the following year. Since this is a festival night, the Christian converts would then have gathered together somewhere else to hold their own meetings. The extremists knew this, and knew where Staines would be. They probably knew he was sleeping in the jeep if female Christians were in the house. It was all very well planned."

Act like the Christians

But the plan badly backfired. "Most Hindus in India were appalled, and it galvanized anti-extremist feeling."

Olive Rogers, a former British missionary in India, returned from a recent visit saying, "I never saw such a strong reaction against the

Hindu extremists among the populace. They were disgusted. The media, taxi drivers, journalists - everyone was ashamed of the BJP and the RSS."

She added, "I saw an editorial in the Mangalore papers challenging the RSS to do what the Christians do - work among the poor and the helpless, leprosy patients, street children, prostitutes - and only then would they have the right to criticize Christians."

At the bottom of the secret list were the least overtly evangelistic denominations: the Roman Catholics and the former Anglicans, which are now two distinct denominations (called the Church of North India and the Church of South India). They concentrate spreading the gospel via social

work, and the RSS strategy with them is to "infiltrate and befriend."

Admiring fascists

The RSS, founded in 1925, has approximately 750,000 members dedicated to "Hindutva," an ideology that insists the Gangetic plain should contain only Hindus, and all other religious adherents should leave or be pushed out. The RSS is composed of intellectuals who have worked their way into the highest reaches of society.

Members take an oath which in reality becomes chillingly totalitarian: "For the betterment of my sacred Hindu religion, Hindu culture, and Hindu community, I will dedicate myself to the prosperity of my Holy Motherland."

RSS founders such as Savarkar, Golwalkar, and Subhash Chandra Bose all admired Hitler and Mussolini, and ran the RSS along similar fascist lines. Bose worked with Mussolini and wrote a biography of him.

The BJP, the party which currently runs India, is the political arm of the RSS. Statements of concern by BJP leaders about the violence have sounded all too hollow in the ears of many Christians, especially when attacks on Christians and churches dramatically increased when the BJP took power in 1997.

After 13 months, the BJP was narrowly defeated in Parliament, and new elections are planned for September.

Saskatchewan decision reflects society's anger against God

... continued from page 1

Lake could have been "exempted from participation by leaving the room, remaining silent, or in later years, by using a prayer of choice," said Halvorson. Rebecca knew this, but "all of these three possibilities were problematic for her. Once in Grade 8 she voiced a prayer of her choice and was immediately reprimanded by a teacher."

"Lake considered it disrespectful to leave during the Lord's Prayer.... Leaving the room was, to her, akin to punishment. To stand silent was offensive, too, because for her, prayer should not be a passive event," Halvorson wrote.

At the inquiry, no one spoke up on behalf of the school board, which is one reason Halvorson cited for ruling in favor of the complainants. The judge argued that the school board did not direct that the prayer be used but rather left that to the discretion of teachers, something he thought broke the constitutional rule on this issue.

Even though school Bible readings are constitutionally permitted, the judge also ruled that the school board was being unconstitutional by allowing the readings earlier than the last 30 minutes of the school day. He also recommended that the school board develop a multicultural religious policy.

Encourages civil religion

Rosanna Langer told CC, "I think the [judge's] order is a decent one. It's careful." One reason she objects to use of the Lord's Prayer in schools is that it has often been "used consecutively with the singing of the national anthem."



Professor Del Fredlund

Because of that, children could be confused and "see the two synonymously."

Although children could exempt themselves from saying the Lord's Prayer, "in reality, there is no alternative made available to them," said Langer. If children leave and wait in the hallway during the prayer, they see this as "synonymous with punishment," she argued.

Del Fredlund, a professor of civil engineering at the University of Saskatchewan, disagrees. He thinks the options for skipping the Lord's Prayer have been reasonable ones.

Fredlund attends a Pentecostal Church and lives in Saskatoon. His children have gone through the public school system and "we have one in high school now," he explains. The Lord's Prayer is not used at that school (Walter Murray Collegiate), but it is used at local elementary schools.

He believes the children who testified at the human rights inquiry were expressing concerns which their parents had "put into

those children's minds. The parents are the ones who put the case together."

Fredlund is disturbed by Halvorson's decision. "I've had a real struggle," he says. "I think what we're seeing is an anger in society against God. God has given us free will. Society will choose, and society will also suffer. I think the Christian community needs to speak up. I see the Christian community is silent.... The Lord's Prayer is acceptable in content to all religions. But the man who spoke it [Jesus] is not acceptable."

Mixed feelings

Bruce Leiter, pastor of Bethel Christian Reformed Church in Saskatoon, has "mixed feelings about this issue." On the one hand, "students do have the right to say their own prayers or to leave during the Lord's Prayer, so there is flexibility in the [school] board policy," says Leiter. "On the other hand, I can understand that children don't want to stick out in the crowd, because kids can be cruel when someone is different."

Leiter's own children are grown up and living in the U.S. "Many of our church's children go to our local Christian school, which has just become an associate school of the public schools, but which will be able to continue with its spiritual and biblical emphasis," he explains.

Wes Vanstone is principal of Saskatoon Christian School, which joined the public school board in June. He notes that "the same people who were opposed to prayer in school were opposed to

us joining" the public school system.

He believes the Lord's Prayer should be used in public school classrooms. As he puts it: "Using the Lord's Prayer leaves God general. I've even had a Sikh say he has no problem [with the prayer]."

Although Vanstone's school is now part of the public system, he

says the ruling "didn't affect us." His school's mandate is still "to provide education from a biblical worldview," he asserts. "We'll use the Bible in everything we do." But Vanstone notes that other public schools in Saskatoon will have to suspend use of the Lord's Prayer. He thinks the ruling should be challenged.

Bible Society challenges Saskatchewan decision

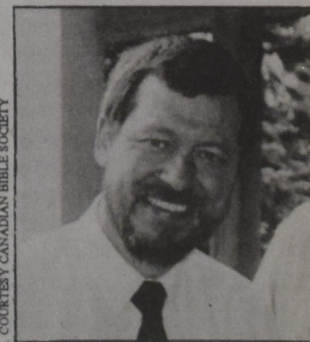
Alan Doerksen

TORONTO - In response to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission's decision to ban the Lord's Prayer and Bible readings in public schools, the Canadian Bible Society has sent an open letter of protest to heads of Christian denominations across Canada. The letter asks Christian leaders to make a "positive, prayerful and well-balanced" response to the decision.

"We urge you to do everything within your means and conscience to encourage the elected governments of Canada to restore God's written Word, the Holy Bible, to its rightful public exposure," wrote Bible Society national director Rev. Greg Bailey. In his letter, he questioned whether freedom of religion is currently being decided only in terms of freedom from religion.

The Bible Society stated that banning the reading of the Bible in the public forum further reduces the possibility of exposure to higher ideals, such as the qualities of love and mercy, the Golden Rule and the Ten Commandments.

"Not being exposed to the teachings of the Bible could have irreparable consequences among our youth," stated Bailey. "The U.S. Congress has recognized this and is now attempting to restore the Ten Commandments back into the school system" there.



Rev. Greg Bailey

News

Religion-based hiring and firing upheld

Alan Doerkson

STEINBACH, Man. — A Mennonite college in Manitoba which fired an employee because she was a Mormon has had that right upheld by an adjudicator in a human rights decision.

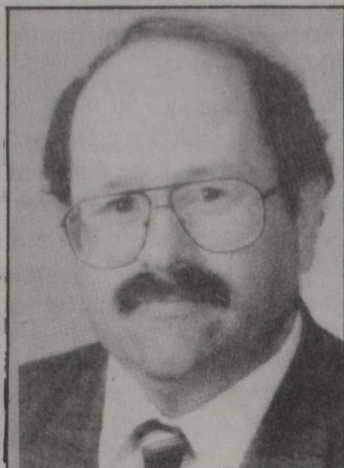
The adjudicator, lawyer Donald Knight, said Steinbach Bible College (SBC) was within its rights to dismiss Esther Schroen, a Mormon, from her job as an accounting clerk. Knight said that in this case SBC should be allowed to "discriminate" on religious grounds, which is normally prohibited by the law.

Schroen was raised a Mennonite but later converted to the Mormon faith. When she was hired in 1991, the school was under the impression that she was still a Mennonite. When the school found out otherwise, Schroen was fired two days after she had been hired.

Schroen filed a complaint with the Human Rights Commission in August 1991, alleging that the college discriminated against her by terminating her employment on the basis of religious belief, contrary to Manitoba's Human Rights Code. But SBC filed a reply, stating that Schroen's termination was based on a bona fide and reasonable requirement for the job, in accordance with the code.

Purgery

It took until April, 1997 to appoint Knight to adjudicate the dispute. Knight held hearings in January and February 1998 and recently announced his decision. In that decision Knight said: "It is very clear that the dichotomy between the evangelical Anabaptist Mennonite faith and the faith of the Mormon Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints is



Dr. James Beverley of Tyndale College and Seminary gave expert witness at the hearing.

diametrically opposed."

One key point Knight focused on in his decision was that Schroen had signed the college's statement of faith when she applied for the job. That statement clearly spelled out Christian principles, some of which are opposed to what Mormons believe. But despite being a Mormon, Schroen had written, "Yes, I agree with the statement of faith," and said in her testimony: "I had no objection to it."

But under cross-examination, Schroen admitted there were differences, such as in the interpretation of the Old and New Testaments, and in the Mormon practice of baptism of the dead. When asked if she agreed with Mormon founder Joseph Smith's statement that all other "sects" are wrong, Schroen said she agreed.

Evasive testimony

Knight wrote: "I gained the impression that Ms. Schroen knew that if SBC were aware she was of

the Mormon faith, she would not be offered the position. I find that her original application, resume, interview and her Statement of Faith were all calculated to mislead and conceal the fact that she was of the Mormon faith.

"When asked, she admitted that it would jeopardize her job application at SBC if her prospective employer knew her faith. I also find that Ms. Schroen was not sincere when she stated that she had no objection to the Statement of Faith, when in reality it went directly against her Mormon faith and beliefs.

"I find that she was less than candid when answering questions about her religious beliefs and workings of the Mormon faith. I find that she was far more knowledgeable than she let on, based on her activities within the Mormon Church, demeanor and evasive ways when testifying. I do not accept her evidence that she had no objection to the Statement of Faith that SBC required her to acknowledge."

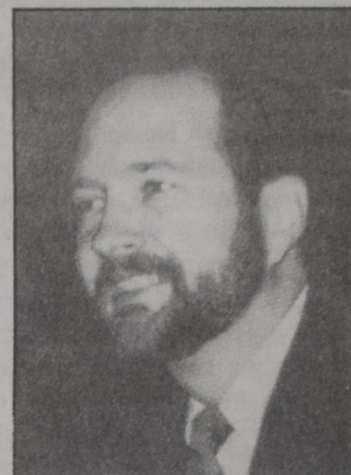
Knight also noted that SBC staff are expected to interact with students in a community

atmosphere. He quoted the SBC handbook as stating: "The staff seeks to help students to learn and to develop so as to become more Christlike. Staff are encouraged to have an open door policy for students, learn to know as many by name as possible and make themselves available to them."

'Unacceptable and contrary'

At the hearings, two well-known Christian professors, Dr. John Stackhouse of Regent College and Dr. James Beverley of Tyndale College and Seminary gave expert witness about the differences between Mennonite and Mormon beliefs, which Knight accepted.

But Kenneth Filkow, chairperson of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission, says the commission is reviewing the decision carefully. "The commission is greatly concerned that a broader interpretation of the decision may lead to the type of employment requirements by religious institutions which ... would be unacceptable and contrary to accepted human rights principles," Filkow told



Dr. John Stackhouse of Regent College.

Canadian Press.

Don Thiessen, acting president of the college, says the decision was "clearly in our favor. We're very pleased. We're gratified.... Any organization has to have limits and parameters as to who belongs."

Knight's ruling can be appealed to the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench by anyone involved in the case.

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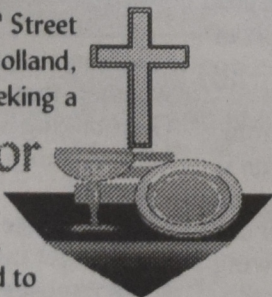
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Editorial

What do we do with anger?

Al Helder

There seems to be so much anger, so many angry people in our society. We read about road rage, and when we see it or experience it, we are afraid. We hear about young people whose anger has turned to hatred and violence. Domestic violence and abuse approach epidemic proportions. Anger seethes in the voices of people who see themselves as victims, whether real or imagined, of everything from the government to social injustice. As we observe the extremes, and perhaps deal with angry people in our own lives, we realize that our learning to deal with anger is critical if we are to be healthy, mature and Christlike people.

As Christians, how are we to think about anger? More importantly, how can we deal effectively with our own anger? Many of us were taught as children to be afraid of anger – our own and others'. We have also heard sermons noting how close anger is to the spirit of breaking the sixth commandment.

Thus some hold anger inside where it can become emotionally, physically and spiritually harmful as it creates anxiety or depression. Our

anger then easily gets misdirected at some scapegoat, or shows itself passive-aggressively (soft sounding words with barbs that cut deeply), or it explodes over some insignificant offense.

Others seem to be angry all the time, playing over and over in their heads the long litany of wrongs they have endured. The truth is that we all experience and express anger.

'Be angry and sin not'

The Bible talks a lot about anger. There are over 250 references to it. On the surface it is not surprising that Christians get confused about how we are to deal with anger. On the one hand it talks about its dangers. Proverbs warns us, "A quick-tempered man does foolish things" (4:7); "Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared" (22:24-25); "An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins" (29:22).

The epistles of Paul warn again and again about the destruction that anger causes in the church. In Ephesians 4 our anger is acknowledged with this: "In your anger do not sin" (vs. 26).

At the same time a majority of biblical references are statements about the anger of our just and holy God. In Mark 3:5 and in Matthew 23 we see the heat of Jesus' purposeful anger. Somehow anger is an intense feeling God built into our emotional systems, and has a good purpose. However, it quickly becomes a force of great destruction if we fail to deal with it well.

Taking responsibility

The first step in dealing with anger is admitting we get angry and to take responsibility for our feelings. In fact, we *make* ourselves angry. How we interpret the events and behaviors of others creates our feelings. If I interpret the event of being cut off in traffic as a self-centred person recklessly endangering my life and invading my space, then I will feel anger. If I were to interpret the same event as someone who has some sort of emergency, my feeling would be concern or compassion.

We create our feelings with our interpretations. And once we feel anger, our natural inclination is to replay the offense over and over, justifying and escalating our anger. Taking responsibility for our anger demands our self-discipline in slowing down, rather than escalating, an emotional explosion that lashes out at people. The explosion is always a destructive act that creates fear and harm in our relationships. We need to slow down and think about whether the offense was real or a product of my self-pitying imagination.

That takes us to step two: dealing with the feelings. Many of us want to swallow them, pretending they are not there. The Apostle Paul had a

sense of the danger in that. "In your anger, do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry." In other words, deal with it. But how?

God's gift – yes, gift – of anger is very important. Like physical pain it is an intense signal that something is very wrong. Like pain, it points to something beyond itself. It is a symptom that tells us we have something important to deal with. In other words, anger is a secondary feeling, and to address the anger means we need to identify the primary feeling.

In the 1970s it was a fad in psychology to "help" people deal with their anger by expressing it. They were encouraged to hit pillows, scream and vent their rage. The net result was that the feeling of anger escalated instead of decreased. To rid ourselves of the feeling of anger we need to acknowledge the primary feeling under it; perhaps fear, hurt, frustration, disappointment, rejection, abandonment, abuse, etc.

The hard part

Once the primary feeling is identified we can move to step three and decide what needs to be done. Does someone need to be confronted for what he or she did? Do we need to repent for being selfish or jealous, for creating an offense? Do we need to begin the hard work of forgiveness and reconciliation with someone who has hurt us? Or is it insignificant enough to let it go?

Going through these steps may be something that takes us a few minutes, or in the case of deep-seated hurt or long term abuse the process may involve years of therapy.

In James 1:19-20 we are warned about our anger: "My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires."

In Ephesians 4:31-32 it says: "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

We sense that our anger is very important, and it is very important for us to deal with it well, whether that means opening ourselves before God, talking with a friend about our feelings to help examine them, or going through extensive counseling.

If we refuse to take responsibility for our anger we will get into serious danger. Confronting our anger exposes difficult issues of justice or people taking advantage of us or failing to respect us.

On the other hand, confronting our anger produces health, and creates more intimate relationships. Anger is a gift of God calling us to be responsible when something is very wrong.

Al Helder is pastor of First Christian Reformed Church, New Westminster, B.C.

Christian Courier

Formerly known as Calvinist Contact
Founded in 1945

An independent biweekly that seeks to:

- report on significant events in the Christian community and the world;
- express opinions infused by Scripture and rooted in a Reformed perspective;
- provide contact for the Christian community.

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Letters

Cats' contributions make exquisite Sumatran coffee

Bert Hielema's column is usually the first item I reach for when I read *Christian Courier*. I appreciate his humor generally, and his tongue-in-cheek witticisms. A few moments of enjoyment and a laugh or two helps us not to take ourselves too seriously.

I read with great interest Bert's story about the special blend of Sumatra coffee. It brought back memories of my experiences while serving for Her Majesty, Queen of the Netherlands, on North Sumatra in the region of the Toba- and Karo-Bataks.

Get it quick!

When on patrol we observed the peasants walking behind their animals, cats especially. (Cats were being bred behind the palisades of the people's *kampongs*.) They would carry a rotan basket lined with leaves from banana trees and scoop into it what the cats left behind. They needed to be quick to prevent the cats from burying the stuff, as they usually do.

Once their baskets were full, the women would come in their sarongs, bare feet and elaborate

hairdressings to bring these baskets on their heads to their *kampong*. When they walked past us we would give them plenty of room, for the aroma emanating from the baskets would overwhelm you completely. We thought those Karo-Bataks, who live so primitively, were great environmentalists, like Bert Hielema. They used the stuff from mother nature to fertilize their vegetable and fruit gardens.

Feline fertilizer

Now, however, after 50 years, the truth has finally come out and the secrecy of those very special and exotic Sumatran coffee beans has been spilled.

Some years ago, I revisited, with my wife, this Batak region. We stayed in a guesthouse in Brastagi. The very first thing served to us was an almost black, exquisite Sumatran coffee. As is the custom there, half of the coffee is poured in one's cup, the other half into the saucer. We used to refer to it as "kopi-samma- kaki-mandi", meaning "coffee with a foot-bath." It's still my favored way to drink good coffee. Before we left we purchased, for a very reasonable price, a few pounds to take home.

I have never been able to locate or find this special Sumatra coffee anywhere in North

America, not even in Toronto, where there are shops which import coffee beans from all over the world and will roast them to your specification.

If ever I find this particular blend of Sumatran coffee, I will keep some, and the next time we travel through Tweed, Ontario, where the Hielemas live, which we usually do twice a year, we would be happy to call on them so that he and his wife may also taste of this delicacy.

Until you've tasted that special Sumatran coffee, you coffee drinkers out there really don't know what you are missing!

Jan G.H. Vandergeest
St. Thomas, Ontario

Thanks!

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who attended my retirement evening on July 17 and to those who sent me best wishes and honored me by giving a donation to Reformed Faith Witness, the publisher of *Christian Courier*.

Your love for me and your support of Christian journalism throughout the years binds our hearts as we all run the race toward the ultimate retirement in Paradise!

Bert Witvoet
St. Catharines, Ont.

Appreciates dialogue with worldwide church, popular culture

Thank you for that great evening roast, July 17, celebrating Bert Witvoet's work with *Christian Courier*. May God bless you as you continue.

One very strong element I have always looked forward to is your coverage of the life of the (holy catholic) church all over the world. And thanks to Marian Van Til for her review of [Stanley Kubrick's] film *Eyes Wide Shut*. Those reviews, and any articles that engage in a dialogue with our popular culture, in the spirit of Christ, are what catch the attention of my kids. My daughter has seen the movie with a friend, and I haven't yet.

Agnes Kramer-Hamstra
London, Ontario

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Member of Canadian Church Press and Evangelical Press Association.

Canada mail: Publications Mail Registration No. 0451. Postage paid at St. Catharines, Ont. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, Ont. L2W 1A1.

U.S. mail: Christian Courier (USPS 518-090). Second-class postage paid at Lewiston, NY. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, Box 110, Lewiston, NY, 14092.

Subscriptions:	Canada	U.S.A.
(effective Jan. 1, 1999)	(G.S.T. incl.)	(G.S.T. free)
one year (26 issues)	\$39.54	\$31.60 (US)
two years (52 issues)	\$75.00	\$60.00 (US)
overseas one year \$80.00 surface mail		

Advertising deadlines: display advertising: Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. (8 business days before publication date); classified advertising: Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. (8 business days before publication date). See classified pages for more details. Advertising rate sheets available. (ISSN 1192-3415) Published biweekly on Mondays.

Address all correspondence to: 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, Ont. L2W 1A1, Tel: 905-682-8311 or 1-800-969-4838, or fax: 905-682-8313, e-mail: subscriptions:ccsubscrip@aol.com, advertising: ccadpromo@aol.com

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Environment

Caterpillar and homeless men dig in together

Wooden pallets – and lives – restored

MORTON, Ill. (Religion Today) – An innovative partnership between a tractor company and homeless people is proving to be a boon for both parties. The arrangement began when the Caterpillar Parts and Service Center in Morton, Ill., had a problem. It was using two million loads of wooden pallets each year to ship parts for its products; but it was throwing away 400,000 broken pallets.

That amounted to a mountain of waste, threatening to overwhelm the community's landfill. And local government officials changed the Peoria County Commercial Recycling Ordinance in 1994 to ban the pallets.

Caterpillar needed help. Its search for a solution ended with a partnership with Victory Acres, part of Peoria Rescue Ministries. The ministry helps homeless men overcome addictions to alcohol, drugs, and gambling, and to become self-sufficient. It was not in the pallet business.

But Caterpillar and Victory Acres struck a deal.

The company helped the ministry set up an operation to recycle the pallets at its secluded 200-acre farm. It invested \$188,000 and hundreds of hours of manpower, helping make changes to the shop to provide more electricity, a new water line and shed, and better computers. Equipment purchased included a pallet grinder, dismantler, an assembler, a portable conveyor, tractors and fork lifts.

35 truckloads a week

The homeless men at Victory Acres were trained to do the work. At first, they ground the wood into mulch to sell for landscaping. The operation soon expanded, and instead of being mulched, the damaged pallets were reconstructed in

various sizes, which is more lucrative. Victory Acres now sells good-as-new pallets to Caterpillar and other companies. Workers process 35 tractor-trailer loads of pallets a week.

Beyond building pallets, Victory Acres' goal is to build each man's self-respect and help him find his place in society. The 55 men who enter its program each year gain industrial and mechanical job skills as they work with the pallets, said Jerry Trecek, executive director of Peoria Rescue Ministries. The men also learn farming and horticulture, and receive spiritual guidance through Bible study, worship and biblical counselling.

Money saver all around

The results have been beneficial to everyone. The program saves Caterpillar \$633,476 a year, said Caterpillar. An unexpected benefit has been \$182,000 in additional yearly revenue, due to acquiring a new customer who bought Caterpillar engines when the efficiency of the Victory Acres project became evident.

Communities in central Illinois are saving about \$900,000 as a result of 50 men a year leaving the welfare rolls, Trecek said. The operation also saves 20,000 trees and eliminates the need for 18,500 cubic yards of landfill annually. Caterpillar no longer puts any pallets in the landfill.

Trecek had been looking for a way to make the ministry self-supporting, one that "is not a drain on others." He is delighted that he has found it, he told Religion Today.

The men in the program "are proud people" who have made some bad decisions, but they now have a brighter future, Trecek said.

Salvation is more than soul saving

Have you ever had a moment when someone asks the kind of question that make you wonder if you and the questioner live on different planets? This happened to me last week. In a public forum, a Christian gentleman, scientist and professor asked: "What does the environment have to do with creation, anyway?" The wave of groans and hoots that went up from the audience gave him a clear signal that his view of creation had collided with another view.

How is it that so many of us Christians still regard creation almost exclusively in terms of origins? Why does the debate over evolution take centre-stage for so many Christians when they hear the word "creation"? As a survey I conducted this summer shows, the focus of many of us on one part of "creation" – the origin of the universe – has impoverished our view of the world and our task in it.

Fixated on origins

The creation/evolution debate has claimed much of the attention of the Protestant church in North America for most of this century. I had a sense that this was true, but it was dramatically confirmed by a detailed survey of journal articles. Over the past 30 years there has been an overwhelming focus on the creation/evolution debate: in secular papers, in theological journals (as might be expected), but also in Christian academic publications.

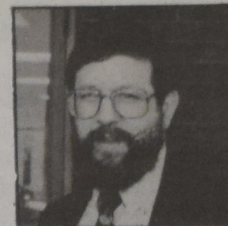
Even after popular news magazines like *Maclean's* and *Time* began feature sections on the environment, the Christian press was slow to respond with environmental coverage. Interestingly, *Christian Courier* and *The Banner* (the official publication of the Christian Reformed Church in North America) are notable exceptions to this pattern.

But anyone reading the 100 or so journals I surveyed would find two articles on origins questions for every one on the environment. It is only in the last decade that some Christian authors have begun to write in a sustained way about the earth's environment which God has given us for a home.

Finding hope in the contemporary creation

We miss more than the environment by focusing our understanding of creation only on origins questions. Not only does the richness of scriptural teaching on creation go by the board, but we also underplay Christ's redemptive work.

Creation waits...



John Wood

Have you noticed that we have let discussions about the environment proceed without reference to redemption? The hope of the gospel is almost absent from talk about the environment. One common complaint about environmentalists is that they are always fearful. They possess, it's said, a "crisis-of-the-week" mentality which plays on our fears for the future.

But do we have much more to offer if we claim that Christ is interested only in saving us *out of* this world? What hope is there for the earth and for us if we Christians have such a truncated view of creation? We need more than a view that looks only at beginnings, and then misses the meaning of the contemporary creation.

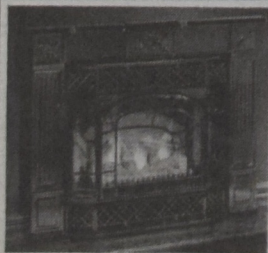
No 'redemption in a vacuum'

The good news is that today we are once again remembering that God's redemption does not occur in a vacuum. And surprisingly to some, this encouraging development is finally coming not just from ecologists, but from theologians. These women and men are urging us to rethink the redemptive and sustaining work of Christ in the context of creation. This isn't such a new idea. There have been voices right along encouraging us in this direction. Twenty years ago, for instance, James Houston put it this way, "The world has forgotten its Creator, and [we] have fallen in love with [our] introspective powers instead. We need once more to see the vision of the sanctity of creation, where common things are sacramental. We need to enjoy the creation as well as to know how to live in it wisely" (*I Believe in the Creator*, Eerdmans, 1980).

More recently, we were challenged to start this rethinking by Scott Hoezee in his book *Remember Creation: God's World of Wonder and Delight* (Eerdmans, 1998). Hoezee puts the emphasis on the simple wonder creation elicits, correcting our reductionist tendencies. We need to remind ourselves that God deeply loves his creation – all of it – and that Christ's redemption has repercussions which reach throughout the cosmos.

John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College, Edmonton, Alberta.

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Arts/Media

Workshop supplies hints for film watching

Marian Van Til

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — "Movies act as literature for the younger generation." That assertion was made by Wade Bradshaw at the start of a workshop on "The Art of Film Watching." Bradshaw is the executive director of The Francis Schaeffer Institute in St. Louis, Missouri; the workshop was part of the recent conference on "Evangelicals Engaging Culture" held in Annapolis, Maryland (see reports in CC, Aug. 9).

Since movies are "the new literature," according to Bradshaw, for Christians, being knowledgeable about films "is a great way to

engage culture, because film is so much a part of our culture."

In his view, "Many people in previous generations who would have been our novelists or playwrights are now our film directors," so we should pay attention to what they're doing.

But Bradshaw was cautious about recommending specific films — "a film we would all approve of would have no real teeth."

Bradshaw interacted freely with the participants in his workshop, which led to a discussion of why "the church has long been uncomfortable with particular [artistic] uses of the imagination." Chris-

tians have disapproved of movies for mostly moral rather than aesthetic reasons: "Some disapprove of fantasy, of a use of the imagination which blurs lines between reality and unreality," said one participant. "We're afraid to 'lose control' of ourselves." Others agreed that "film is feared for its potential bad influence on us" and avoided as "a waste of time" because it is presumed that Christians "should be doing better things."

Analyzing vs. enjoying

Bradshaw acknowledged that film as a medium and an art form is particularly powerful because it

envelops us and can overwhelm our senses. "A film may portray behavior which we may take on," he asserted. And that behavior may come from "false universes portrayed; attitudes and beliefs which are diametrically opposed to Christian faith. When the lights come back on, the visual, aural and story impact can leave us with images we can't shake."

It may also have negative influence on the actors who create these imaginary worlds, which is something we don't often think about, Bradshaw said.

Bradshaw believes that "the church is weak on analysis of these issues." He said he is often asked: "Why do we have to analyze movies? Why can't we just enjoy them?" There's a fallacy in that question, he said. "That assumes there's a dichotomy between thinking carefully about something and enjoying it. But careful thought and analysis increases one's enjoyment even more. If analysis *doesn't* increase your enjoyment of it, that's one way to know it's a bad film."

Three simple questions

Bradshaw suggested that anybody can learn to usefully critique films by asking three simple questions of themselves and the person or people with whom they saw the film:

1. What did you think of it?

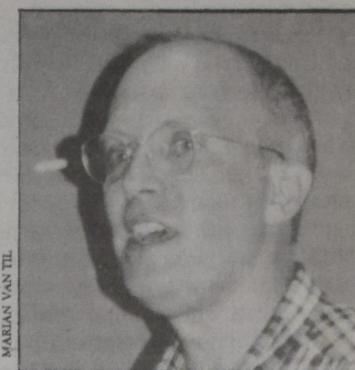
Did you like the film? What did it leave you feeling or thinking about? Seeing a film alone "gives a different experience," but the lone film goer can still ask him- or herself these questions.

2. How did the film get you to think or feel that way?

How did it build suspense (if there was any)? What impact did the music/soundtrack have? The cinematography? A person can "grow in observation, learning to see and understand by noticing details," Bradshaw said.

3. Was whatever the film made you think or feel legitimate?

"Christians are so often concerned with sex, violence and swearing," Bradshaw noted, "that



Wade Bradshaw

frequently we swallow a film's philosophy unexamined."

Having said that, Bradshaw went back to those "big three pitfalls" (sex, violence, language). He acknowledged that he personally has a low threshold for being able to "take" certain things he sees or hears in films, which may not be the case for all Christians. But in general, he suggested that it's wise not to watch something "that will leave me longing for someone who is not mine, or for something I don't have. What it says about sex ought to be true — though not pleasant, necessarily."

Regarding violence he said, "Cultivating the mind of Christ is contrary to doing violence to other human beings." And about bad language: "This is hard. Realism does have its place. We have to distinguish between what's merely distasteful to us and what will influence us negatively."

And if your critique answers all come up negative, or you're feeling uncomfortable while watching a film, "there is always the option of walking out," Bradshaw said.

'Don't watch passively'

He had these final suggestions: "Pay attention to directors; follow directors as you would an author."

"The theatre is to be preferred to videos; films were made to be seen on the big screen."

"Don't watch passively."

"Be as concerned to teach children to loathe [artistically] bad films as evil ones."

Crossroads Centre features virtual reality theatre journey



Live action drama combines in the Crossroads Centre's Journey Into The Fourth Dimension.

Alan Doerksen

BURLINGTON, Ont. — The Crossroads Centre in Burlington, Ont., is best known as the home of a new Christian TV station, as well as programs such as 100 Huntley Street. But this summer, Crossroads has branched out by opening a new Virtual Reality Theatre to offer a production called *Journey Into The Fourth Dimension*.

By combining laser lights, large-screen video projection, digital surround-sound, wind and fog

generators and live-action drama, the production takes audiences on "an incredible journey that speeds from the origins of time into the prophetic future of the next millennium," according to a Crossroads press release.

The production is based on 100 Bible verses, which form part of the narration. It starts in heaven before the creation of the world. God creates Lucifer, who first worships him, but soon rebels.

In the next scene, The Fall, God

casts Lucifer from heaven. As the narration expresses it: "God then stripped Lucifer of his celestial body, removing all of the musical instruments and precious stones. Then, like a lightning bolt crashing down from heaven, the God of creation cast Lucifer and one third of the angels from his presence.... All of heaven stood in stunned silence. The chosen conductor was gone and so was the music. But God had a plan!"

Opening the gateway

The creation of the world and of humankind are then depicted, with the help of computer animation from Miramar Productions, which cost \$1,000 per second to produce.

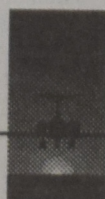
Briefly, the story of Jesus coming to deliver fallen humankind is told, along with the story of Pentecost and scenes projecting the end times.

According to Brantford, Ontario-based Richard Pearson Ministries, which produced the program, viewers will "ride the wind of God's Spirit, speeding from the origins of time into the prophetic future of the seventh millennium. As the Father of Lights opens wide the gateway to eternal life, the powers of the world to come will be released for his final harvest. At that moment, you will discover the eternal purpose for his utmost creation. That creation is *you!*"

Until Sept. 6, *Journey Into The Fourth Dimension* will be shown at the Crossroad Centre's Virtual Reality Theatre, at 1295 North Service Road, Burlington. For tickets or information, interested readers can call: 905-332-6400, ext. 1108.

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Church

I love to tell the outside story

John Krueger

Lugging the TV video camera on the trail was awkward, but this human interest story was worth it. Members of St. Andrew's United Church in Sudbury wound their way along the Cup and Saucer trail on an afternoon hike.

The reporter waved her mike in front of a church member who stopped to rest amid the white pine, spruce and granite. "What prompted your congregation to come way out here?" The woman clutched the straps of her day pack and then motioned. "Look around you. What better place is there to learn about God the Creator?"

A newsworthy hike

A congregational hike is newsworthy because most churches have retreated indoors. Of course, there's nothing wrong with wanting to avoid being drenched or frost bitten through an open air service, but nearly all our meetings take place inside. The climate is controlled with a switch of a thermostat. Everything we stare at — walls, pews, and altar — bear the human imprint. Even our baptisms have moved from the river to an indoor marble font. But modern conveniences come with a price. We may miss something if we always hear about God or read the scriptures behind church walls.

Wendell Berry contends that biblical miracles which may seem incredible, outdoors will seem merely natural. "Whoever has really considered the lilies of the field and the birds of the air and pondered the improbability of their existence in this warm world within the cold and empty stellar distances will hardly balk at the turning of water into wine —

which was, after all, a very small miracle. We forget the greater and still continuing miracle by which water (with soil and sunlight) is turned into grapes."

Many of us have experienced our own miracles through a life-changing event at a Christian camp or retreat centre. Here God's word and world could resonate together and broadcast in stereo as it were. Our surroundings influence our perception of God. If our worship and devotion always occur indoors, we may be drawn to God as Redeemer or Holy Spirit, but feel detached from scripture which speaks about God's work in creation. We may be quick to offer praise but slow to care for the earth.

It's easy to stay indoors because we are conditioned to avoid rain or snow. Sometimes I ignore the weather forecasts, fling on my rain coat and hike under bleak and sombre skies. They draw me to my true centre—into the weather of my heart. One rainy day I headed for the Spencer Gorge wilderness area, a niche in the Niagara Escarpment. I've hiked the Bruce Trail that runs through the gorge many times, but one afternoon stands out.

Psalms of the waterfalls

It was too wet to take along the scriptures, but the psalms of the waterfalls were enough. I edged along the rim of the gorge and as it cooled, mist arose above the trees. I had learned why this happens from high school science and a tea kettle. But chemistry doesn't take the mystery from the mist. The translucent angel ascended like a prayer while I shivered from the damp.



JOHN KRUEGER

I wanted to share the gorge with others so I took a group of thirty young adults for a hike. No TV

cameras followed us on the trail that quiet Sunday morning. Yet it was a special time for these college

residence advisors to gather before the busy semester started. We saw how glacier melt water once plunged over the escarpment and carved what felt like a remote mountain canyon. Following the trail, we came to an open area where huge chunks of dolomite cap stone had once tumbled into the gorge. We perched on top of them, ready for our morning service.

Mark took his violin out of his back pack and we sang, "This Is My Father's World." Some hikers stopped to listen. They had an "Isn't this quaint" look on their faces. One of our students stood up and read from Job. "But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, ...Which of all of these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this?" There is an illuminated manuscript, a text in the creation itself—in the rocks, trees and streams—which the written scriptures exhort us to read.

I looked around and felt like many others. God can be found among the pines as well as the pews. We need the straight lines of church architecture; the steeples and theology to point us heavenward. We also need the curves of creation which are full of the swirling finger prints of God.

John Krueger is the career- and placement co-ordinator at Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ont.

In Indonesia, a Christ we haven't seen

SITUBUNDO, Indonesia (Religion Today) Violence has not stopped the church in Indonesia. Mobs have killed and raped Christians and have destroyed churches, but followers of Christ are preaching about God's love and serve those who hurt them, Tom White of Voice of the Martyrs told Religion Today.

"People say [Westerners] need to help them, but in my opinion they help us," White said. He visited Jakarta and other islands in June to evaluate the situation. "We take them Bibles, but when I come back I feel I have been enriched. Maybe there is a Christ we [in the West] have not seen yet."

A new church in the city of Situbundo displays a charred wooden cross, the remnant of the original structure that was burned by arsonists several years ago, White said. The pastor placed it there "as a symbol of the sufferings

of Christ and the resurrection victory that comes out of even the flames and the ashes."

Like Paul and Silas in jail

Faith in God helps overcome potential bitterness. A pastor whose mother, father and sister were killed in his church's sanctuary still sings and preaches there. "It's not difficult because I have Jesus in my life," White said he told him. Churches that have been attacked have continued donating food and other aid to their Muslim neighbors. Others donate their daily rice ration when they are fasting. "This is the resurrection love that many have shown to their enemies," White said.

"They are not downhearted or depressed. They are living in victory. It's like Paul and Silas singing in jail — that is the spirit of the Indonesian Christians."

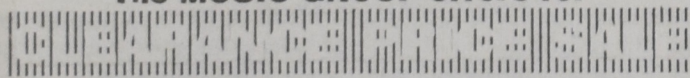
Attacks on Christians by

Muslims have increased since 1997, when political and economic havoc gripped the country, White said. Riots and bloody acts of reprisal forced long-time dictator Suharto from power last year. Social problems heighten the religious conflict. More than half of the people are out of work, and famine threatens some parts of the country, news reports say. Hundreds of people have died this year in religious violence, including 35 in clashes three weeks ago, Reuters reported.

Largest Muslim population

Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world. The South Pacific archipelago nation has 200 million people on 3,000 inhabited islands. Among them are 15-20 million Christians, the World Evangelical Fellowship says.

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Church

Evangelical Fellowship disappointed with Dobson court decision

MARKHAM, Ont. — The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) is disappointed that the Supreme Court has failed to extend any legal protection to a child for harm suffered due to the negligence of his mother while the child was in the womb. The Court did, however, say that this was a matter for the legislatures to decide. In fact, in Ontario, a child has this right under the Family Law Act.

The case was brought by Ryan Dobson against his mother for injuries he suffered while in the womb as a result of an automobile accident. "Out of our belief in the sanctity of all human life and our concern for the vulnerable, [we] believe a child should not be precluded from holding another person responsible for injuries the child suffered while in the womb," said the EFC in a press release.

"We welcome the recognition by the majority that in this case the woman and her unborn child can

be treated as separate legal entities," the EFC continued. While they agree that the mother and unborn child have a uniquely close relationship, they "oppose the creation of a legal fiction that the pregnant mother and her unborn child should be regarded as one."

The EFC said it "affirms the Court's recognition that the relationship of the expectant mother and her unborn child is of 'fundamental importance to the future mother and her born alive child, to their immediate family and to our society.' Failing to recognize any legal obligation of the mother for her unborn child does not do justice to the child."

EFC concluded that the case involved "the responsibilities of a pregnant woman as a driver and the duty of care she owes to anyone who might suffer an injury as a result of her negligent driving. This was not a case about the mother's lifestyle choices."

Shopping centres, fitness centres, prayer centres?

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (EP) — North America is filled with shopping centres, fitness centres and amusement centres. But soon a new kind of centre will appear in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and then perhaps across the U.S. and Canada: a prayer centre.

The Nehemiah Center, to be housed at First Covenant Church, near the Metrodome, will bring various regional prayer ministries together under one roof. The church building will need some refurbishing, and Steve Loopstra, executive director of Midwest Concerts of Prayer, expects it to be ready by early October.

A group of Christians began envisioning a "prayer centre" and what it should offer. They decided it should include a 24-hour prayer room, a prayer resource room for churches, a "war room" with maps to track the growing prayer movement, a training centre, and a ministry hub for various organizations which work to promote prayer.

The centre's name alludes to the Old Testament story of Nehemiah's rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. The walls connected the city's various entrances and provided protection for the city. "When the churches are connected it will bring spiritual protection to

the city," says Loopstra. "The idea is to connect the churches with information, with prayer, with resources, with training for intercessors, with prayer for pastors — all of those things."

Reconnecting with cities

The Nehemiah Center will house Midwest Concerts of Prayer and these other ministries: Bethany Urban Development, Freedom in Christ Ministries, Harvest Evangelism (coordinating Lighthouses of Prayer), Religious Information Resources (a demographic and research ministry), Life Center of Prayer (intercessor training), Celebrate Jesus Twin Cities, a mission planter for the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, and Kingdom Oil (helping business people use their resources for ministry).

Loopstra intends to eventually create a similar facility in St. Paul, and hopes the centres serve as models for a network of regional prayer centres throughout North America — and act as an example of a way to breathe new life into aging inner-city churches.

The people at First Covenant Church are excited about the upcoming change, says Mark Stromberg, pastor of church

Getting beyond 'quiet time'

"The news about Jesus spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." Luke 5: 16

Some time ago, well-meaning believers began to actively promote the idea of "a quiet time": a time set aside by each Christian for daily Bible reading, meditation and prayer. A great idea, to be sure, and one that has the potential for benefit, but the concept soon became a prescription: 15 minutes every day — read for 10, pray for 5 and experience spiritual growth.

Books, journals, and even Bibles have been developed around this concept, with ever-demanding requirements: get up 30 minutes earlier than normal; memorize this chapter from Romans; write down every prayer request and every answer.

Many of us want spiritual growth, of course, so many of us have purchased the "right resources," set our alarms early, and stayed on a good schedule. For maybe a week.

Then we'd skip a day. Guilt. Then a week. Lots of guilt. Finally we couldn't even look at the devotional book without convincing ourselves that we had done irreparable harm to our relationship with God.

Forget the formula

Sound familiar?

I often find in talking with fellow believers that the one area in which they would like to improve their relationship with God is setting aside time to focus on him. Many ask me for good devotional books or specialized Bibles that will help them get into a routine and make it stick. Many admit that it is hard for them to simply sit down and read the Bible. And how many of us can stay focused for longer than three minutes in prayer?

I believe that God desires an intimate relationship with each of us, and that time set aside to develop that relationship is necessary and valuable. But I become concerned with "prescriptions" or "formulas" for success.

People are different, and their needs for developing an intimate relationship with God are going

development. The Nehemiah Center promises to breathe new life into that historic congregation.

"We realize it won't work to be a suburban church downtown," says Stromberg. "The church has become increasingly open to new ideas, simply because we've realized that the traditional way of doing things is no longer working. We need to radically reconnect with our city and community, and be open to new ways of ministering."

Thompson concludes, "We see it as a good use of what we have, and we believe God will continue to open doors [so] we can reach people for His Kingdom."

Chapter & Verse



Al Wolters
• Mary S. Hulst Antonides

to be different. Family schedules, personality types, and personal interests all contribute to what you will need in order to develop your relationship with God. To say that all of us should wake early and spend 15 minutes in Scripture reading and 15 minutes in prayer does not take into account the beautiful variety that is present in God's children.

God knows your needs

For some, an early morning time of prayer and meditation before the other members of the household arise is perfect. For others, reading Scripture during a lunch break and keeping a prayer journal are helpful. What is most important is to discover what you need and to make time for it. Maybe listening to conducive music in the evening and then spending time in prayer would be most beneficial. Maybe listening to sermon tapes during your commute would help you grow. Maybe, if you are married, devoting time as a couple in prayer once a week would be a great asset to your faith, and not incidentally, to your marriage.

God wants a relationship with us, and he who created us knows what each of us needs. Try something for a while, and if that doesn't work, try something else. For your relationship with God to stay fresh and vital, the tools you use to build the relationship may need to be changed. Use music, Scripture, prayer, personal worship, journaling, sharing with friends — whatever it takes for you to grow in your understanding and appreciation of how God is working in your life, and beyond.

That's the goal: to create a space in your life where you can meet God and grow in your understanding and appreciation for who God is and how he works. God's work is never done, and he invites us to be a part of it.

Mary Hulst Antonides is pastor of Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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Controlling Anger

A story about anger

Mirth Vos

A woman was raised to believe that anger is sin. Texts in the Bible proved it: "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice" (Eph. 4:31). And: "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires" (James 1:19). Nothing could be more clear.

Actually, any strong emotion created uneasiness within her family. Emotions are self-indulgent, she learned. God designed each person's life, and a person's reactions to what God was including in his plan for him or her did not matter any more than the reactions of a flea. "Buck up." "Rise above it." "Don't be silly." These were the maxims followed and repeated by her pious Christian parents.

Not surprisingly, in time, the woman experienced a significant depression. In the process of psychotherapy her Christian therapist taught her a creational perspective on human life. She learned that thoughts and emotions are the pulse of individuality. Instead of clones, God chose to make individuals, and part of their individuality is expressed in their having an emotional life. A person who could not utilize emotions was someone "cut off at the knees" as far as developing a secure, firm self.

What a surprise! Emotions were God's idea. He had designed them. Did this include anger?

What about God's anger?

The woman noticed what had never struck her before: that God himself gets angry! He expresses anger against sin. The woman knew the darker details of the history of salvation very well: God's sending the flood; God's sentencing of the Israelites to 40 years of wandering; God's using the Israelites to punish the Canaanite nations when "their cup of iniquity was full"; God's dispersing of the people of the northern kingdom; and his exile of the people of Judah.

And then there was the Final Judgment to come, so sobering that the woman just wanted to shield her mind from it, of which all these punishments in biblical history were but a small preview. Why, the old, old story of Jesus and his love, resulting in his giving

his life as a sacrifice, was about God's *anger* against sin!

It was liberating for this woman to realize that God, too, gets angry, and that experiencing anger is part of the life equipment God had given her. As her therapy progressed, she discovered that underneath her calm demeanor a great deal of anger lay unresolved. She learned to channel her anger constructively, and she became a stronger person.

In the following, heady, change-filled days of her psychotherapy, some verses about anger formed in this woman's mind. She called it "Anthropology."

anger my caged demon
bottled up in skin
gingerly transported
liquid hydrogen

my control judicious
allows you to seep
through slit-crevice mouth and eyes
now pretend to sleep

I can hood your lightning
leash your panther taut
but fatigued uneasy
must I should I ought?

your quicksilver beauty
your lithe laser brain
writhe integral to me
these constrictions maim

God this baffled crying
is it self or guest?
part of exquisite design
or primeval mess?

long ago your kiss breathed
blazing love clean wrath
like a pulse through matter
is your image that?

I look in the mirror
mirrors never lie
see a figure preening
gorgeous anger I

Anger became a concept of special interest to this woman for the rest of her life. Because she was part of a Christian community she heard a lot of sermons, which sometimes included admonitions about anger. She had to sift through what she heard because not everyone had her privilege of making connections between faith and the psychological and physiological reality of anger. But one sermon did have a lasting impact.

It was part of a series on the book of Lamentations. This book

records God's anger against Judah, which resulted in the nation's exile. God's self-revelation is that he is a very angry God indeed. But, the preacher in his sermon explained: God is not *Anger* the way God is *Love*.

God's anger occurs *because* he is Love, and is sparked when he himself *as love* is ignored, even trampled on, by the creatures he loves. God is angry when his love is rejected.

Did the woman need to revise her verses? Was anger really part of humanity's being made in God's image? The woman told herself to keep the question open-ended, to keep on learning, to keep on reflecting, and to keep on asking God's Spirit for direction.

Naive impressions

The first thing the woman learned was that she was pretty naive about anger. Her home environment of repression had been uncomfortable, but it had been very safe. In the homes of many other people anger had not been repressed but had been rampant. Many persons, as children, lived in environments of bickering, sarcasm, humiliation, tantrums, threats, shunning, icy silences and physical injuring.

Anger between marriage partners was something children learned to dodge for weeks at a time, even for years. It was all a secret, of course. Fortunately, their being part of a social community and a church community allowed these same people to practice benign behaviors when they were with friends and fellow worshippers. (The woman remembered her own parents and praised God for their integrity.)

As the woman learned more and more about these secrets she sometimes wondered whether the culture in which a man was raised taught him that he was entitled to give free reign to anger. It seemed that his spouse would take on the task of shifting the family environment around him the best she could, perpetuating the idea for her children that a man's anger must be tolerated.

A long red thread

Further knowledge enlightened her to the fact that women's styles of expressing anger could be just as emotionally deadly to others, if perhaps less violent. Was it a case of six of one and half-a-dozen of the other? Perhaps. But she noticed

that in society as a whole, an angry man was much more acceptable than an angry woman.

"Gorgeous anger I"? The phrase was pretty wobbly now, even laughable! There was so much to uncover. Brain physiology, learning theory, the workings of the endocrine system, child development, family systems, gender roles, ego supplies, power struggles, the defence mechanisms of a child's brain that enable him or her to survive abuse.

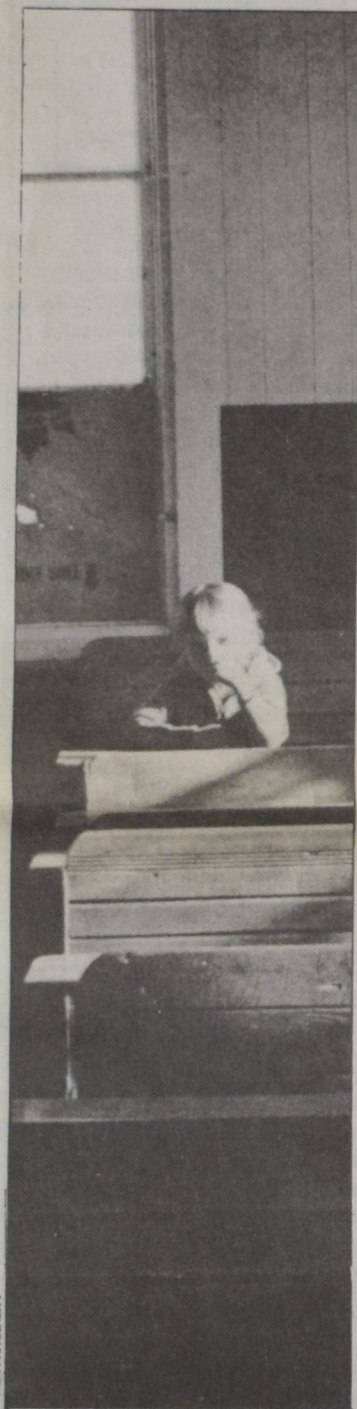
Through all these bodies of data, anger wove its red thread. The woman traced the thread, becoming ever more impressed with the complexity of the presence of anger in human functioning.

After quite a few years, the woman was asked one day whether she had any insights about anger. Her mind went into overdrive, spinning this way and that. No crystalline poem formed itself now. Instead, a list began to shape itself, of which each item was worth at least a book-sized explanation. But because she was not a scholar or a scientist, a list was the best she could do. This was her list:

1. God has created humans with an endocrine system that supplies large amounts of adrenalin when a person is in jeopardy so that the person can run away or fight back. The purpose is self-protection. This is the physiological "anger event."

2. Sin has twisted itself around the anger response so cleverly, so thoroughly, that it is very hard to separate anger from sin. Some cultures have been polishing ethnic anger into hatred for centuries. Western culture places vengeance, violence and destruction in entertainment venues and luxuriates in the expression of anger that way. Myths of domestic harmony paper-over widespread domestic coldness and violence. Because sin has claimed anger as its own, it is understandable that St. Paul includes anger among the sins that new Christians must give up.

3. Yet Christians must do the thoughtful, intelligent, grace-blessed work of separating anger and sin. For Christians who are cut off from their emotional life, it is helpful to connect expressing human anger with God's expressing anger. That gives them permission to find a buried part of their life energy. This is useful for Christians who, rather than facing



NINA KAGINSKY

Any strong emotion created uneasiness within her family. Emotions are self-indulgent, she learned. God designed each person's life, and a person's reactions to what God was including in his plan for him or her did not matter any more than the reactions of a flea.

injustice in their own lives, wimp out by quickly jumping to forgiveness, and consequently keep living with dysfunction.

4 However, thoughtful Christians will also come to realize that for the majority of persons, connecting their own anger with God's is dangerous. The concept of being "prophetic" is sometimes bandied about in Reformed Christian circles, sometimes resulting in domineering and judgmental exchanges.

Anger that a person must suppress because of fear creates psychic cripples.

Persons within families, too, can believe that they are God's spokesperson in the family and can punish and control, i.e., abuse. Although human beings have anger and God has anger, we may never speak as if we are God. The sin of persons doing this has splattered the church with blood in horrifying episodes, and rent its fellowship throughout history.

5 Living with one's own anger-responses and managing them in a sanctified way is a very important part of living the Christian life. One must always take one's own anger seriously. The experience of anger is filled with important knowledge that a person needs to know about him- or herself. Taking one's anger seriously does not mean that one *acts out* the anger. Instead, it involves deciding just where to place it and

how to use it. This allows one to follow God's love guideline: to love God above all, and to love our neighbor *as ourselves*.

6 Honoring one's own anger responsibly before God almost always requires *delay*. This is a much more creative process than the common-sense "counting to 10," although that is a good beginning.

First, the rush of physical energy that anger produces must be looked after. Any non-destructive activity that lets a person exert strength through his or her shoulders and arms is useful for draining off anger energy. Wringing or ripping up an old towel, scrubbing a floor, chopping firewood, playing squash, and hitting a mattress with a racket are responsible ways of letting out anger energy.

Secondly, the delay is to be used for reflecting, perhaps using writing to do so: What is my anger teaching me about myself? Are there echoes of old anger in the present situation? What can I do to comfort and encourage myself? What can I ask of another person so that the anger-producing situation does not occur in the same way?

The delay can also be used for prayer. For a Christian, this is the best part of the delay. A Christian knows that God's very Spirit is interceding for him or her, too. The delay usually creates a sense of choice: one can choose to lay aside one's anger, or one can choose to use its power to confront a situation of misunderstanding or injustice.

7 A child's, spouse's or friend's anger must never be mocked or

discounted. It needs to be acknowledged as valuable information about the other person. Spouses can model the delay technique within their home, and teach it to their children. For a little child this might be a "time out"; for an older one, allotting time for sorting things out by way of talking and listening. There must always be encouragement to use the strong energy of the anger to make a constructive move.

8 Anger is often a habit. The efficiency of the brain causes it to quickly make an habitual pattern of a given response sequence. For those who have power over others, anger can provide a "high," an exhilarating release of tension. The result is painful abuse, and a culture strewn with victims. Current research shows that mothers are as guilty of this with their children as fathers are, and wives as guilty over against their husbands as the other way around. Reflecting on one's anger patterns often shows a person that one's anger is recycled, self-indulgent, abusive.

9 Those who have the anger habit must repent, stop getting angry, and make amends for the destruction they have caused and are causing. Breaking a habit takes planning before the stimulus occurs, and therefore requires a lot

of effort, and vigilance. That's why anger management courses exist. The brain must be taught new sequences. When Jesus taught us to pray for our enemies, he was indicating that new brain patterns can – and should – be forged.

10 Anger that a person must suppress because of fear creates psychic cripples. The anger of a child trapped in abuse turns into impotent rage that manifests itself in certain symptoms. People who become such emotional casualties (of whom there is a staggeringly large number) must be treated gently, and assisted in moving on developmentally. The helpless rage must become mature anger, empowering the person to choose what next to do about what he or she has endured.

Working out one's salvation

So. The list. The woman decided to leave it at that. It was hard, trying to grapple with a myriad of concepts. She *had* learned a lot, for sure. She reread her verses, old now. She admitted she still liked the images, the hopefulness and joy. Did she still believe that a human being's anger response is part of being made in God's image?

She thought about Jesus driving the money changers from the temple. She remembered his scathing

x-ray of the Pharisees' white-washed selves. She heard in memory his suggestion that a millstone be tied around the necks of those who cause "little ones" to sin.

She decided, yes, anger that is part of a passion for what is good, what is just, what is loving, is indeed a reflection of the way God shows his anger.

So she decided. Then she heard a strong voice cry: "But beware! Delay! Reflect! Pray! Let the Spirit temper that anger response and turn it into fearlessness, firmness, meekness, and even love. 'Be angry and sin not!'"

The woman continued to learn. The managing of anger, she realized, is a large part of working out one's salvation with fear and trembling.



Mirth Vos has been a personal and marriage/family therapist for many years. She lives in Barrie, Ont.

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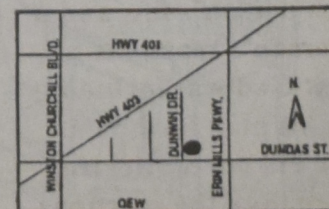
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Controlling Anger

Stand up, Christian! and assert yourself

Jay Reay

In today's high contact world we are always in danger of being irritated by other people, even brought to outright anger. The idiot who cuts us off on the freeway; the moron who pushes in at the supermarket checkout; the half-wit who snaffles the parking space we are about to back into; the rude, the insensitive, the thoughtless — why should they always get away with it?

The response to all this, of course, is to suppress our rising ire. Smile. Count to 10. Bite the bullet. On no account let our feelings show. It's a response proper for a Christian, but it is mightily frustrating.

When our patience is sorely tested, and it is indeed a saint who can constantly smile as another of life's little barbs snags the flesh, we swallow our pride along with our wrath.

But it's a very bitter feast. Once in a while we should get angry and show it. Jesus did. Although the money-men are still in the church, his anger at their lack of respect for God's house was, of course, proper, and necessary.

Asserting ourselves is good for our sense of self-worth, probably good for our blood pressure, and might be the catalyst

needed by our persecutor to change a lifetime of annoying habits.

But as Christians, just how do we do that? A Bronx cheer or the rather more coarse gesture adopted by the English bowmen at Agincourt are hardly appropriate, even if you know what I'm talking about! Shouting is not seemly and often makes matters worse. Today's response of choice to any situation — shoot first and claim a less than idyllic childhood is to blame — is not an option; besides, it can get you 25 to life in even more irritating surroundings.

Sharpen that stiletto!

My recommendation from a lifetime of being put upon by the selfish and the moronic is to use irony. A soft word may well turn away wrath, but pushing home the sharpened stiletto of a subtle put-down is much more fun!

Our persecutors will be cut to size, if they understand it of course; but if not, we have the satisfaction of demonstrating our intellectual superiority. Mind you, such hubris is not to be recommended for every day situations, just the major tests of our moral strength. We can flunk those tests

from time to time.

I argue that it is part of good stewardship to show our true feelings once in a while, we owe it to society, to our persecutors and to ourselves to be assertive when the chips are down.

An egg for an egg

The scene is a restaurant to which we have looked forward all week with salivatory anticipation (yes, I know gluttony is a sin, but that's for another day). The waiter brings us our eggs Florentine — half-cooked, congealing, disgusting: no simple mistake: a genuine insult on a plate.

Do we silently munch through the mess, the whole evening ruined by chagrin and heartburn, not to mention the prospect of salmonella poisoning? Do we throw the plate across the room, hurling with it verbal abuse on the chef's head?

No. The Assertive Christian merely attracts the waiter's attention (this may take some time, but patience is a virtue — see, you're one up already) and ask him to return the delightful concoction to the eggshells it has so recently vacated, and bring a light salad, the kitchen stove obviously

not yet being hot.

The action moves to a gas station, location of so many annoying encounters with selfish fellow drivers. We've filled up the tank, paid, and obtained a token for the carwash. Now to drive through for a sparkling finish.

But wait! Where there were no cars waiting in line when we drove in, now there is one blocking our way. Engine off. And devoid of driver.

The driver is in the store, mulling over candy and soft drinks, oblivious to the fact that he is preventing us from getting a quick wash and being on our way.

We wait in the heat, tapping our car roof, glaring hard at the oaf who has now moved over to the magazine stand.

We think how we might make our displeasure felt — do we bend his radio aerial? Or, eyeing the grocery bag in our own back seat: stick a banana up his exhaust (entertaining but self-defeating, as the car won't move at all)?

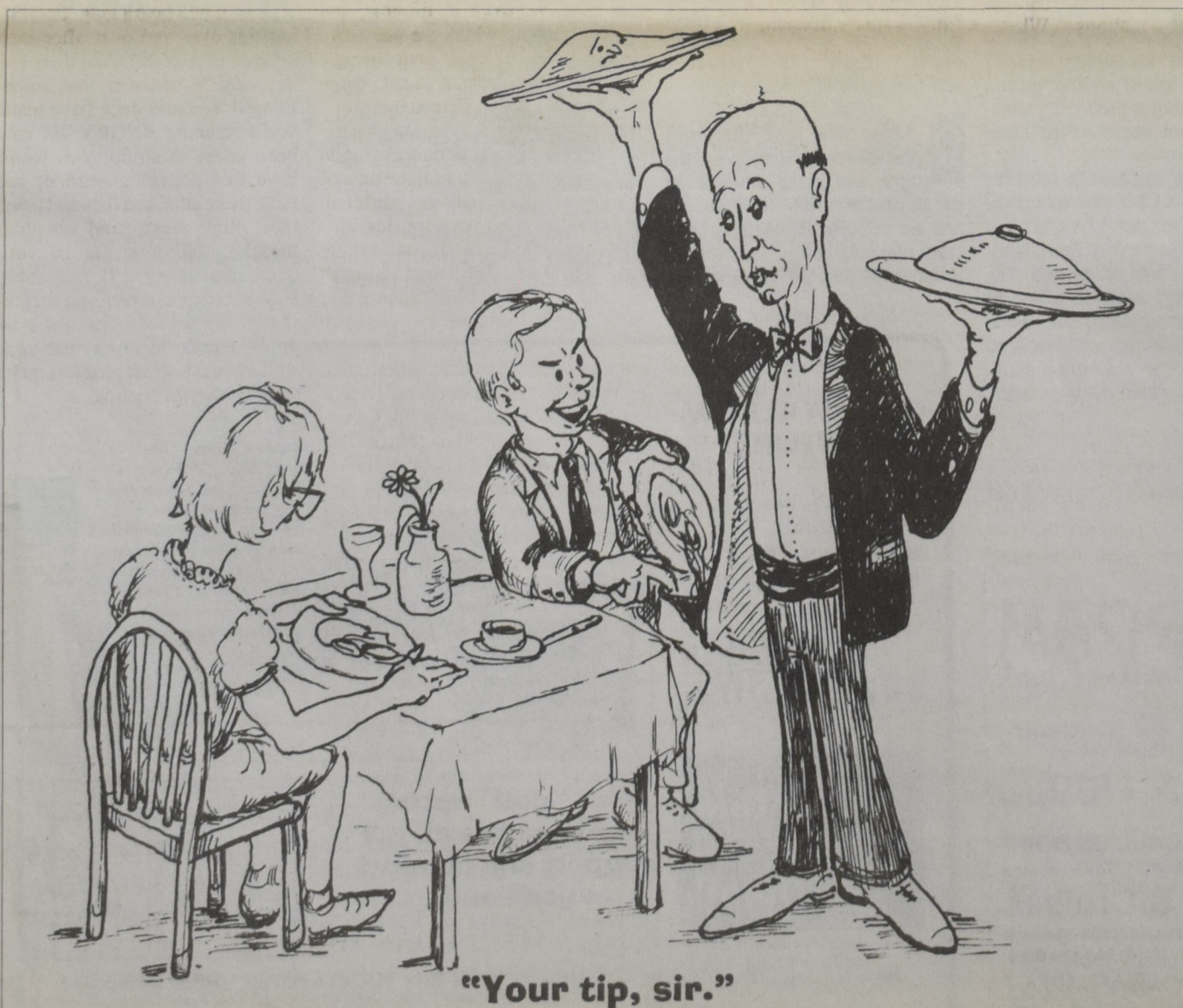
Shoveling coals

No — when he finally saunters back to his vehicle we accost him, gently, all smiles and affability. "You know, I've always wondered whether to buy a car just like this. Thank you for the chance to study one close up. Now I know why I'll never buy one of these." Your persecutor's puzzlement turns to concern — whatever could you have meant? What's wrong with the car?

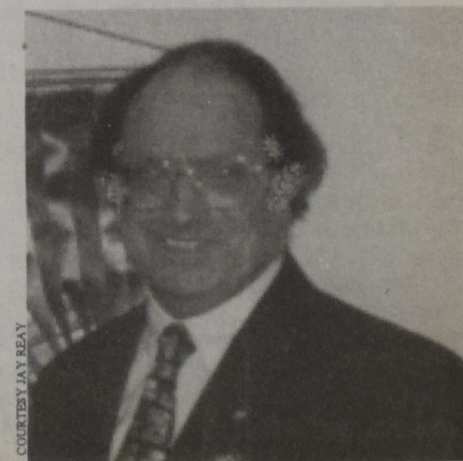
Irony really scores if our protagonist hasn't got a clue what we're talking about. The look of mystification on his face adds to our satisfaction.

Of course, we shouldn't be doing all this at all. Christ teaches humility; he tells us to turn the other cheek; to return good for evil; to accept the barbs of life with equanimity. But sometimes it seems a shame that there isn't a more *satisfying* way to heap coals of fire upon the heads of the deserving.

Jay Reay is a British writer and consultant specializing in knowledge management. He lives with his wife, Philippa, and their two daughters in the countryside above Oxford. Jay was educated at a high-Anglican public school and trained as a Christian counselor with a Church of England home-church group 15 years ago.



"Your tip, sir."



Controlling Anger

A spiritual challenge: learn to let go of your ANGER

Diane Klein

"Why can't I stop being angry?" I cried as I ripped a handful of tissues from the box my therapist had put beside me.

"These days everything makes me angry." I heard myself scream "EVERYTHING!"

That was a few years ago, and Kleenex sales have decreased markedly in Creemore since that day. My ANGER had been profound. I had hoarded and nurtured it, polished and treasured it, and kept it deep inside me where it could grow. I used it for *protection* and for *power*; and when this worked well, I used it more and more. I didn't realize until too late that my ANGER had matured and thrived by eating up pieces of my heart and soul –

literally. And that it had almost taken my life. Since then I've been a much more sympathetic observer of destructive emotions, both in myself and in others.

My story of anger is not unique. A lifetime in the church, many years in the business world, and recent experiences as a church consultant have brought me into contact with lots of wrath.

It's helpful to me to classify anger into two different kinds. What I'll refer to as anger with lower case letters is a natural human response to the perception that some rule of conduct has been broken – whether a civil law, a societal standard of behavior, a family rule, a church tradition or belief, a personal code of conduct, or simply some standard of personal preference (*guilt* is your response to the belief that *you* have broken one of these).

Lower case anger is a gift to society for the protection of individuals and development of a healthy communal life. It's a handy "red flag" which signals a threat to justice and righteousness. Think of Moses coming down from the mountain with the Law in his arms, observing Israel's idolatry, or Jesus coming upon a scene of

idolatrous abuse in the temple. That anger was natural and appropriate, and served as an instructive example to God's people who observed that anger expressed.

"Capital letter" ANGER looks and feels the same as anger, but it's a practised response, developed to achieve some other objective than justice. In my angry years, I used ANGER as a wonderful self-empowerment tool. When I'm ANGRY, I'm an intimidating force to contend with. But

worse still: when I'm ANGRY enough, I will do or say *anything* to help me win my case.

All other considerations fall away – win/win outcomes, the feelings of brothers and sisters, the health of my marriage, ethics and any down-line considerations. What a feeling of strength to be able to set these considerations aside! Feeling totally right and totally hard-done-by is a gratifying sensation. It fuels not just moments of sanction, but lifetimes of energetic embattlement. It is a wonderful escape from the criticisms of others, from doubt, from fear, from uncertainty. Extremely effective and absolutely deadly. It robs us of joy, damages our relationships with others, and destroys our lives. And it is as addictive as alcohol, gambling, pornography or abuse. It kills.

You've seen what ANGER can do to individuals, to marriages, to

families, to congregations. I don't need to tell you. But you've also been victimized by it. I bet. I mean ANGER, not anger.

ANGER usually seems so immediate. Instantaneous, really, the almost inevitable result of a particular "trigger" or stimulus (View A). There is never enough time between the snide criticism from a fellow church member and your heated flush of ANGER for you to grapple with the nature of the attack and the range of your possible responses. That's why I always saw myself as a victim: *other people gave me ANGER*.

Since then I have learned that the burden of ANGER is mine, that I, and we all, carry around with me a big pile of screens, a complex grid of perceptions through which I filter all of my life's experiences (more like View B).

Some of those screens were forced on me when I was too young to evaluate or protest (so I am a victim of sorts); some I

simply accepted without question; and some are my own creation. Some of them put me in danger, some of them are simply not helpful, and still others give my life meaning and joy.

These filters are the perceptions of reality which most of us have been developing over a lifetime and which we use every day. They include and are being shaped by:

- our past experiences, and age at the time of these different experiences;
- our family of origin (with all their limitations and quirks), and our birth order;
- the culture in which we were brought up, including the values and religious beliefs which were an inherent part of that culture;
- our education, Christian, secular, formal, informal (including some indoctrination);
- our genetics and gender, mood and health, etc.

There could be distortions of

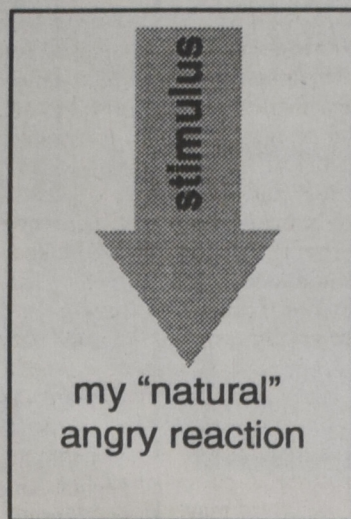
reality lurking in any of these filters, and who knows how these aberrations crept in? The point, though, is not to discover *how* they crawled in – but to identify and acknowledge *that they are present*. This painful examining, sorting, evaluating of filters is very like housecleaning – and it's called therapy.

You can do therapy on your own (but beware of using your existing filters to evaluate your existing filters – no help there!) with some self-help books, your Bible and keeping a journal, or with kindred souls in your family or therapy group, or with a professional such as a pastor or counsellor.

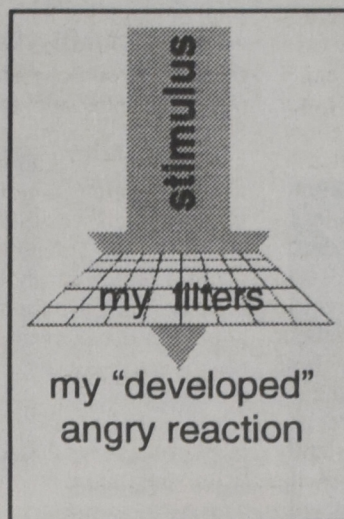
No, you usually don't have control of the stimuli which trigger your ANGER or your anger. But you *can* shape, over time, the nature of your *response* to these triggers. After each time you get ANGRY you are going to have to do some homework: discovering which dynamics were at work in the creation of your ANGRY reaction.

Yes, it will take a long time, doing this over and over after each episode of ANGER. And then, one day, you'll discover that something that would once have made you screaming ANGRY has now been taken in stride. You won't have that pounding heart or red face, those clenched fists and jaws, those tight neck and shoulder muscles, that rope around your chest. Instead, you'll feel calm, strong, compassionate and forgiving – empowered to do good. And you'll rejoice to know that your soul has made great progress on its long journey of healing.

Diane Klein has a graduate degree in business, and has studied and practised in the fields of mediation, conflict management and the resolution of corporate pain. She is Christian Courier's marketing and promotions director.



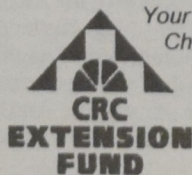
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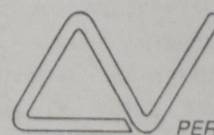
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Controlling Anger/Column

Resources for dealing with anger

Compiled by Diane Klein

Dealing with Anger

Sandy Livingstone. *SL Discovery Consulting Services*, 1997. \$19.95 (US), softcover, 167 pp.

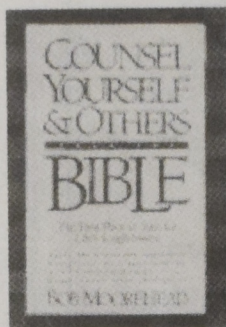
This is a practical, user-friendly treatment of the emotion most often denied, blamed on others, and/or feared. The clear definitions, excellent examples, and straightforward exercises make this book a stimulating read and a useful workbook for individual or group use. People acquainted with 12-step recovery programs will find this a useful adjunct to their personal work.



Counsel Yourself & Others from the Bible

Bob Moorehead. *Multnomah*, 1994. \$26.75, hardcover, 284 pp.

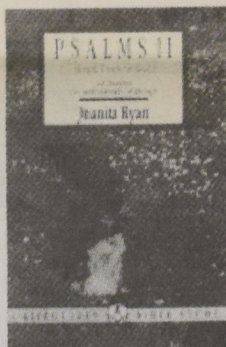
This guide helps readers take advantage of the unswerving guidance available in God's Word, teaching them to dig into the Bible first for the comfort, direction and advice they need. The book focuses on the 33 most common problems for which Christians seek counsel, including depression, marriage problems, anxiety, bitterness and anger.



Psalms II: Heart Cries to God

Juanita Ryan. *InterVarsity Press*, 1995. \$7.39, softcover.

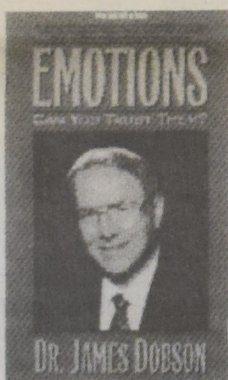
Joy. Anger. Distress. Hope. Trust. These are some of the feelings expressed in the Psalms. Studying and praying through 12 that deal with our emotions will help us to be honest with God and allow him to meet our needs.



Emotions: Can You Trust Them?

Dr. James Dobson. \$9.75, softcover.

Love, anger, guilt and the impressions we experience are emotions that can be a very positive force in our lives if we learn to recognize and control these aspects of who we are. Dobson gives insights into the complexities of our emotional makeup.



Getting Unstuck



Arlene Van Hove

How 'emotionally intelligent' are you?

"A high I.Q. is not a prerequisite for a life well lived" – so says Ellen Goodman, a popular American historian and newspaper columnist. It seems Albert Einstein was no "Einstein" when it came to the morality of his personal life. He left his children and his wife, Mileva, to fend for themselves and set up shop with another woman. Then there's American president Bill Clinton. In spite of his intellectual brilliance he seems to show more than an average amount of poor personal judgment.

And so it is with Sandy, a bright, energetic mother of three teenagers. She has two post-graduate degrees and is at present working in international law. She glows when I ask her about her intellectual accomplishments, but anxiety crosses her face as she spells out her difficulty in managing her personal life.

She laments the estrangement between herself and her husband, and feels frustrated about her inability to be close to her children. She confides that their family conflicts are rarely resolved, and angry outbursts and painful withdrawals are a regular part of family dynamics. She admits she looks forward to her monthly business trips so she can bury herself in her work.

Developing resilience

Sandy is highly intelligent but she needs to work on her emotional I.Q. In order for any of us to live life well we need a healthy dose of "emotional intelligence," a term popularized by Daniel Goleman. This kind of "intelligence" is equivalent to emotional resilience or emotional health.

It is not only about recognizing our emotions but about being self-aware enough to be better pilots of our lives. It is about *mood management* and the ability to balance good and bad moods. It is about *self-motivation* that includes clear goals and positive attitudes. It is about *impulse-control* that manages short term self-gratification for long term goals. It is about *inter-personal skills* that allow us to solve problems effectively.

Symptoms of deficits in emotional intelligence are all around us. Chronic anger, extreme passivity, ongoing impulsivity, unmanageable addictions and constant aggressiveness are just a few. The more obvious symptoms are seen in the prevalence of domestic, substance, sexual and spiritual abuse taking place in our families, church communities and society at large. Each of these plays itself out in a complex web of painful interpersonal relationships that needs to be recognized, untangled and healed.

Christians not immune

Christians are obviously not immune to these struggles. Yet many of us explore our emotional lives only when the last straw has broken the camel's back. We forget that all of creation is fallen, and that facing our vulnerabilities can put us on the road to healthier emotional and spiritual development.

Sandy, for instance, needs to put her faith in God to give her the courage to become more self-aware. She needs to look at her tendency to distance herself from those about whom she cares. She would do well to ask herself what causes her to move away from those who love her and to withdraw into herself. And: how safe she feels when family members express their anger.

Could she be protecting herself by withdrawing? What does she think happens to her husband when she withdraws? Can she risk moving closer to him? How might she feel if she tried? The answers will give her a window into herself, and may bring her back into a loving relationship with her husband and children.

When we prayerfully encourage ourselves to be open to emotional growth we infuse our struggles with the reality of the presence of God. When we have to let go of our "comfort zone," he will be our support. And he'll guide us, body, mind, spirit, and emotions, so that we can live responsibly and healthfully in his world.

Arlene Van Hove is a psychotherapist with Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C. The therapeutic characters and situations she writes about in her columns are fictional, but reflect many people's struggles.

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Society

When does a marriage begin?

Bert den Boggende

The answer to the question in the title seems reasonably easy: It begins at the moment the bride and groom and their witnesses sign documents in a church, or at city hall or some other designated location. Implied in that answer is that those who have not gone through such a sanctioned activity are not married.

Thus, about a year ago in *The Banner*, the official publication of the Christian Reformed Church, Rev. Ken Koeman responded to a question about cohabitation by saying that the questioner should "urge the couple to marry promptly" (July 20, 1998).

In a meditation on the seventh commandment in *Today*, a CRC-produced booklet of daily meditations, Rev. David Feddes stated that "if you are single but you selfishly seek sex without a lifelong marriage commitment, through ... living together, you engage in fornication." (Aug. 19, 1998).

Not so easy

This implication has been increasingly questioned. For many, "living together" has become quite acceptable. Adrian Peetoom, in one of his *Christian Courier* columns with Mary VanderVennen, acknowledged that he had come to accept, albeit reluctantly, this living arrangement ("Two Over 60," July 31, 1998). Mary VanderVennen disagreed; and so did several respondents.

Is "living together" breaking the seventh commandment? Must the church condemn cohabitation, or should it "capitulate to the spirit of the age," as Harry Antonides viewed Peetoom's position? (CC, Aug. 28, 1998).

Some biblical and historical background may be helpful finding a solution.

According to Peetoom, there is no "clear prescription for marriage forms in the Bible." I agree. At the same time I hasten to add that marriage is a God-ordained institution. Throughout Scripture there are statements filling in the contents of that institution.

Fidelity the key

A 1973 CRC synod report regarded fidelity as the key ingredient in marriage. James Olthuis proposed calling it "troth" (*I Pledge You My Troth*). It is important not to confuse the institution with a particular socially sanctioned form of it.

The 1973 synod report is on the right track when it observed that "the roles of the state and church,



A Coptic Christian bride and groom in Egypt.

although important, are external to the relationship of fidelity itself." Scripture gives us some insight into the externalities, either by what is told or by what is not mentioned.

The canonical and apocryphal books describe several weddings (and preparations), the details of which vary. Often there was a contract or covenant, either verbal or written, with or without gifts.

One can think of the story of Rebekah and the gifts given to Laban and her mother; the chronologically much later apocryphal tale of Tobias marrying Sarah.

As the stories of Jacob (Gen. 29:22), Samson (Judges 14:10) or Cana (John 2:2) indicate, many marriages started with public acknowledgements in the form of a ceremony of some kind. Sometimes there was a procession or a song and dance. By contrast, Isaac simply brought Rebekah into his mother Sarah's tent.

Blessings from friends

In some cases there was a blessing, but as the stories of Rebekah (Gen. 24:60), Ruth (Ruth 4:11) or Tobias (Tobias 7:13) make clear, these blessings came from relatives or friends, not from priests.

Another characteristic is that normally the parents' permission was required, but as the story of Samson suggests, that was not an absolute requirement.

These characteristics cohere with Ancient Near Eastern practices. Evidence suggests that cohabitation without further ceremony was socially common and legally sanctioned. What looks like a modern phenomenon turns out to be the oldest form of marriage.

That 1973 CRC synod report says that state and church had important external functions related to marriages. Remarkably, in the Ancient Near East, the state's in-

terest in marriage had nothing to do with the wedding but everything to do with divorce: it was concerned with the financial aspects of the estate.

As old Babylonian and Egyptian texts indicate, wives were property. Via this backdoor, kings and pharaohs became interested in the legality of marriages. For instance, the laws of Eshunna (Abraham's time), say that if a man has concluded a formal contract with his wife's parents and cohabits with her, she is a housewife. Without such a contract, she is not.

Notice that the contract is with the parents, not the wife. The state's concern was really with the establishment of the right form of authority, and with the orderly financial organization of society. Over the centuries, some states have become more involved in the marriage arrangement, as is evidenced by marrying at city hall or before a justice of the peace.

While some of the state's concerns are legitimate, or at least understandable, its involvement does not make a marriage a marriage. The state formulates these legalities for its own convenience.

Church model is recent

Counterpart to this is the religious or ecclesiastical model, which originated in the Greco-Roman world. The first formal wedding ceremony may have been in Greece ca. 400 BC.

Marriage, as such, was regarded as a matter of cohabitation and procreation, a social action without much genuine ethical value. Nevertheless, it was also regarded as a divine institution, and therefore the wedding activities took place in a religious context (ceremonial bathing, sacrificial offerings, etc.).

During the later Hellenistic period, priests became involved in the wedding rites, usually blessing

the bride and groom. Roman marriages, although quite different, also contained religious rites. These pagan Greco-Roman customs significantly influenced the formation and formulation of Christian marriage ceremonies.

Early Christians seem to have followed the marriage customs of the countries in which they lived, but with pagan worship rites deleted.

Often the financial cost prevented Christian couples from receiving ecclesiastical blessings, which were not obligatory. But with the development of marriage as a sacrament, the ecclesiastical model began to replace the lay model.

Yet even in 866, Pope Nicholas I, when questioned by Bulgarian Christians, rejected the idea that a sacramental blessing was necessary for the validity of a marriage, asserting that a couple's simple consent was all that was needed.

Not obligatory until 1563

Later during the Middle Ages, the church attempted to enforce the ecclesiastical model, but as frequent pronouncements of various church councils make evident, the lay model continued to have supporters. Not until the Council of Trent's pronouncement in 1563 did a church wedding become obligatory for Roman Catholics.

By that time the Reformers had made their views known. Most significantly, they rejected marriage as a sacrament, with its implication that the church must give its blessing to the marriage. But they could not agree on the extent of involvement of church and state.

Luther viewed the wedding as a secular, external, social matter. His own wedding to Katharina von Bora in 1525 included a short, joyous religious ceremony which took place in the Wittenberg parish church's portal. Banquets and dances were public celebrations which Luther thought more important.

Calvin, on the other hand, emphasized the ecclesiastical side. He saw marriage as "contracted in the Lord" and when "entered under his [God's] authority... also sanctified with his blessing" (*Institutes*, II, VIII. 44). His own wedding to Idelette de Bure in 1540 emphasized this. He made the distinction of the church giving its blessing over the marriage, not to the marriage, as the Catholic Church did.

Which opinion to choose? In 1580 the newly formed Dutch Republic decided that people could choose a civil or a church wedding.

In contrast, Britain, after a long struggle, opted for an ecclesiastical model, favored by the Anglican clergy but objected to by many members of the lower classes unwilling to abandon the traditional habit of consensual unions.

In 1753 Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act made only Anglican Church weddings valid, not only in Britain but also in the colonies. During the ceremony the priest functioned briefly as a civil servant. Not until 1835 were civil marriages made an option in the British Empire.

Whichever choice was made, the bride was in the inferior position. In the 20th century theologians seriously began to question the presumed male superior-female inferior dualism of marriage. Often the reassessment was based on a rejection of a dualistic understanding of the doctrine of the *imago dei* (image of God).

Unquestionably, the dualistic understanding of that doctrine has contributed to a defective view of marriage.

It seems rather simplistic to view "living together" as a reaction to this defective view of marriage, since that would ignore the long tradition of the lay model (with or without state involvement). Or to blame it on the rise of feminism.

Common-law common

"Common law" was the model of the Ancient Near East, of biblical times, of the Patristic Age and into the modern period. Historically speaking, neither the state nor the church have always been involved in making a marriage a marriage. Put differently, until a few centuries ago cohabitation constituted the beginning of marriage — with all its rights and obligations.

Does that mean that church and/or state can't or shouldn't be involved? Not at all; but we shouldn't confuse the God-ordained institution of marriage with the social customs and rites which have arisen around it.

Christian couples, I hope, will want to ask God's blessing over their marriage and celebrate publicly with God's people.

At the same time, the church, which all too often has confused the institution with the externalities, and has used its rites as form of control, should be more sensitive than the statements quoted in my opening paragraphs.

Bert den Boggende is a teacher who lives in Lacombe, Alta.

Award founders bowled over by Calvin College lecture series

Phil de Haan

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Calvin College's January Series for 1999 has earned the coveted Silver Bowl Award, given each year to the best college/university lecture series in the U.S.

The award is presented annually by the International Platform Association (IPA) which was founded by Daniel Webster.

Calvin competes for the award with colleges and universities from around the U.S., including some of the country's elite institutions. 1999 marks the third time this decade that Calvin College has won the Silver Bowl. June Hamersma, director of the January Series, was on hand in Washington, D.C., two weeks ago to receive the award on behalf of Calvin.

In Hamersma's opinion, the 1999 lecture line-up at Calvin was one of the best ever, and resulted in record-breaking crowds throughout the series. The slate included Garrison Keillor and poet Roland Flint. That duo drew over 6,000 people to Calvin for an hour of recited poetry.

The 2000 January Series

promises to be equally exciting. Lined up to kick-off the series is *Sports Illustrated's* contributing editor Frank Deford. He will speak on "That Peculiar Modern American Institution: School Sports." Terry Gross of National Public Radio will follow Deford.

The rest of the series will feature the usual eclectic mix of academics, cultural observers and artists, including a performance by the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra — which many music critics consider to be the best modern-instrument chamber orchestra in the United States.

It should be clear that "the series is not just about politics," said Hamersma. "We don't limit ourselves. We've made a name for Calvin College by offering a look at current ideas critically in light of history and creatively with an eye to the future. We support freedom of speech and expression; we encourage faculty, students and the community to listen to viewpoints that differ from their own. Bringing a wide variety of excellent speakers on a wide variety of topics to campus is our mandate."

What, me worry?

The week started calmly enough. Monday morning's devotional reminded me:

"Fret not thyself, it tendeth only to evil doing" (Ps. 37:8, RSV). That admonition is particularly good for me: I spend too much time and energy worrying about things which are really out of my control, and which usually work themselves out. So I strengthened my resolve to do better, and carried on. But I had no idea how I would be tested by something I thought I had come to terms with — my computer.

For me, buying a computer was an intimidating prospect which I delayed for years. During that time I took several computer courses. I learned a lot.

For instance, the world of computers has its own language. Not every *mouse* is afraid of a cat. The *boot sequence* has nothing to do with the pile of footwear by the back door. *Chips* don't always go with dip, *bits* and *bytes* are not snack food, and some *processors* can't be used to make coleslaw. Furthermore, *justification* comes not necessarily by faith, but by "accessing" the text information box.

Finally I felt ready. Thinking I was armed with sufficient terminology — and enough cash to buy a decent unit — I dragged my husband out on a shopping trip. It took about 10 minutes to realize that both my knowledge and my funds were inadequate. But we bought a system anyway.

'User friendly'?

The next step was to learn a bookkeeping program so we could keep easy track of our farm financial records. This turned out to be fairly simple. With a "user friendly" program and one afternoon at the accountant's office I was able to understand the process quite well.

It was actually kind of fun. As long as you correctly entered each transaction the computer gave a cute little "bleep." If your information was out of balance, the computer produced a rather rude noise and displayed an exclamation mark on the screen. But you would have to do something extraordinary to really mess up.

So one evening last week I sat down to post cheques from the second fiscal quarter of 1999. For 30 minutes the computer happily beeped and clicked under my instruction, then I smugly

Intangible things

Heidi VanDerSlikke



cleared all transactions and smiled as the message appeared on the screen: I had balanced the account for the entire month of April 1998. Double-checking in disbelief found it was painfully true. I had posted the whole month in the wrong calendar year.

Now what? The lady who taught me the program had given me a business card with her home phone number, but it was almost 9 p.m. Still, she did say *anytime*. Impulsively I dialed her number, got the answering machine, apologized profusely and hung up.

Daughter #1 tried to cheer me up by pointing out that the system will likely crash on January 1 anyway. Daughter #2 helpfully offered the advice I always give *her* during times of crisis: "Don't worry, dear, it will all work out somehow."

'Houston, we have a problem'!

True enough. I decided to shut down for the evening and face my troubles the next day. Just then the phone rang. It was Sheila from the accountant's office. She laughed when I told her what I had done, then assured me it could be fixed "in just a few minutes."

Within three minutes I had lost all control of the computer and was looking at a blank screen. Forty-five minutes later my face was flushed, my hands were sweating and my shoulder was cramped from pressing the phone to my ear. I felt like some Apollo XIII astronaut floating aimlessly in cyberspace. ("Houston, we have a problem!")

Eventually, thanks to Sheila's patient persistence and expertise, I regained control and rectified the problem. I'm still working on getting some of the settings back to normal.

This summer I'm investigating the Internet and getting hooked up to e-mail. I hear there are some courses you can take....

Heidi VanDerSlikke lives in Harriston, Ont., and enjoys writing.

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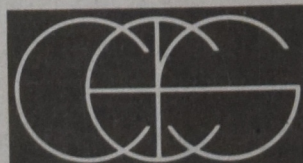
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Comment

Journeying or 'floating' toward what you want in life?

Dear Elizabeth,

One of my high school teachers told me that one should go to university to get an education, not a job. What's important, he said, is not the employment you can get out of your degree but what your education does to you as a person. Fifteen years ago, I believed him. I still do.

So I went off to get my education. Then I went to grad school. Then I finished, and found myself with a huge student loan and no job. One reason I went to Korea was to pay off my debt. It took a while, but I paid it off. I learned to speak Korean, made a pile of new friends, and got two years of working experience out of the deal.

Sounds great, right? And from one perspective, it is. But if I'm really honest with myself, I realize that I still haven't found what I'm looking for. At 30, my life is still very similar to the lives of a slew of university graduates who don't see a lot of opportunity in front of them upon receiving their degrees.

Oh, just great. The librarian just asked me to get off the computer because I've been on it for more than a half hour. I've got more to say, Elizabeth, but I'll let you respond first.

Dirk

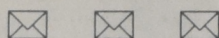


Dear Dirk,

If you're still being hassled by librarians, then I'm not surprised you feel you haven't come very far. But I have to agree with your high school teacher and I'm glad to hear you still do too, despite your experiences. I know I'm one of the lucky few of our generation—I've been in my chosen profession for a decade already. That's something I can hardly believe myself, since I can probably count on one hand the number of friends in the same position. Most of the others have bounced around between one job or another, gone back to school, then started out again in another field.

Sometimes the bounces are our own choices, sometimes they're forced upon us by the economy. But don't you think it's the journey that counts, Dirk? Of course you haven't found what you're looking for, you've only just begun.

Elizabeth



Elizabeth,

I was heading in that direction yesterday morning, right before the librarian yanked me off the computer.

I agree about journeying. And I like it. It includes the element of surprise. And when you're journeying you've resigned yourself to allow whatever happens to happen; in that sense, it helps to keep you both humble and alert. Journeying is special because it sees experience ("life's fine mesh") as just as important as the end product.

But I think a lot of what is going on these Gen-X/Gen-Y days is not as much journeying as it is "floating." I'd define floating as "bouncing around because of no choice, and with little purpose." Floating is not only financially costly but can affect you emotionally, psychologically and spiritually.

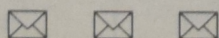
Some of my buddies who have "floated" are now cynical about Christianity, the church, and other institutions. They've seen other parts of the world, heard different voices, and as a result of this exposure have no desire to "come home." Ironically, the privileges of travel and vast life experience have helped to foster a desire to *not* settle down, to *not* become what they initially committed to becoming around the time of their graduation—a contributing, somewhat secure member of a given community.

And here's yet another irony. Despite the financial, emotional, psychological and spiritual imbalances this floating/journeying can create, I still see it as desirable over the conventional life. I feel out of place when I'm around people who never dared to step outside the lines, who did everything as they were "supposed to," and now have healthy, happy, quiet lives which revolve around church and the Christian school. I can't talk to them. They can't talk to me. This may be intolerance and borderline arrogance of mine. But maybe it isn't. Maybe it's natural. Whatever the case may be, I think I'd choose this life over the safe, insular life I see many Christians living.

Hmmm. In 24 hours I've gone from worried whiner to champion of Those Who Believe in Life Experience.

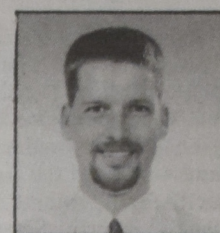
Oh no. Here comes the librarian again.

Dirk



Elizabeth Salomons
egs@smartt.com

Two
Under
35



Dirk Schouten
dbschouten@netscape.net

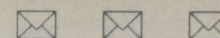
Dirk,

There's been a lot written about our "whining, aimless" generation and, to some extent, I suppose it's all true. But generalizations are dangerous, aren't they? I look for examples among my peers for the kind of Gen-Xers everybody's talking about, and I can't find any. Like you, it's because I see our whining, aimless journeys as fruitful growth, not a costly waste or a journey without purpose.

But if you're worried about your buddies not wanting to "come home," I wouldn't. They will. Part of the problem is we want instant answers and instant results, but faith and commitment are a lifelong process. I'm reading a book at the moment called *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography* by Kathleen Norris. The author came back to her roots, physically and metaphorically, after a 20-year absence from the church. She writes: "Conversion doesn't offer a form of knowledge that can be bought and sold, quantified, or neatly packaged. It is best learned slowly and in community."

The thing is, you can't know what community is until you don't have it. That's why the journeys away are important. Let your buddies float. And I wouldn't give up on them—because God hasn't.

E.



Elizabeth,

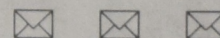
Norris's comments about life experience and conversion being intertwined strike me as wise, but have you noticed that this sort of thinking is not stressed in the educational corners of our Christian communities? At Dordt [College in Sioux Center, Iowa] I studied the doctrine of sanctification as a life process, but before that I had never heard of a philosophy suggesting a connection between faith and life experience. It wasn't until I read James Schaap's essay "On Learning, and Teaching Identity" that I got it or *started* to get it. It seems the older people become, the more willing they are to admit that this, quite simply, is the way it is.

I think we're running out of room. Have a good trip to Alberta.

That's where you're going, right?

Till next time,

Dirk



Talk to you next month, Dirk. Yes, I'm off to Alberta for some "quality time" in the mountains, though it sounds like I should be taking my skis along instead of hiking boots.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Salomons is a freelance writer who lives in Vancouver. Dirk Schouten teaches literature and writing at Kosin University in South Korea.

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News

Hot topics and cool lectures beat the heat in Arkansas

John Wood

SILLOAM SPRINGS, Ark. — When 150 scientists get together to talk about the hot topics in science and religion they can rival an Arkansas heat wave. But the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA) figured out a novel way to beat the heat at its annual meeting, July 30 to August 2, at John Brown University here. It called on Nobel Prize winner William D. Phillips for a cool discussion of temperatures near absolute zero.

Trapping cold atoms

Phillips, the 1997 Nobel winner in physics, gave a guided tour to the strange world of ultra-low temperature gases. At room temperature, he said, molecules zip along

at near the speed of sound. This is far too fast to be useful in synchronizing precise tools such as atomic clocks. But at near absolute zero, a mere 273.2 degrees below zero, molecules slow down so much one can watch them float through a vacuum.

So the Phillips team, which works for the U.S. National Bureau of Standards, searched for a way to slow atoms down by cooling them with laser light.

Light is typically used to heat things up, but can also be used to cool. Like ultra-precise piano tuners, scientists match the frequency of laser light beams to that of various elements. The result: when the beam hits an atom racing toward it, the atom is actually slowed.

Phillips' team put together the lasers in a "magnetic bowl" that selected the coldest atoms and watched the temperature plunge to within 20 billionths of a degree of absolute zero. This is the temperature at which Einstein predicted that new properties of matter would show up, and they did.

The temperatures the team achieved are far below what previous theory had suggested possible. The result is a new understanding of matter, and an atomic clock that is 1,000 times more accurate than before.

A Nobel faith statement

But it isn't just the Nobel Prize that sets Bill Phillips apart. He is an active Christian who sings in a gospel choir, teaches Sunday school and leads Bible studies.

"God has given us an incredibly fascinating world to live in and explore," he said at his first news conference. And "it's fun to do so." The press quickly dubbed him the "God Laureate."

Working at the frontiers of a competitive field makes it challenging to treat people in a Christian way. Citing the Golden Rule

Phillips says, "I try to treat others, whether students or competitors, in a way that I would like to be treated." He concludes: "It is far more important to be the love of God, than to talk about it."

'Intelligent design' heats things up

The question of "intelligent design" was featured also. The ASA encourages thoughtful and provocative scientific discussions, conducted in a humble and loving attitude towards others. While members didn't always agree on what some consider to be a controversial issue, the "intelligent design" discussion shed far more light than heat.

William Dembski, author of *The Design Inference* (Cambridge University Press, 1998) argues that a formal statistical case shows that it is reasonable to expect to see design in the universe. This doesn't tell us who that designer might be, but does change the terms of the origins debate.

In a counter-paper, Terry Gray challenged a widely publicized critique of Darwinism by Michael Behe, asking: is it *Darwin's Black*

Box, or Behe's "empty box"? (See CC, Jan. 2, 1998, p. 3: "Intelligent design challenges evolution.")

Calvin College physicist Howard Van Till reviewed the historic Christian doctrine of creation. Van Till argues that there are self-organizing capabilities in the creaturely systems he calls the "formational economy of Creation."

Sensitive energy systems

Also featured were practical papers by engineers who are building environmentally and culturally sensitive energy systems in remote locations.

Jack Swearengen, who teaches manufacturing engineering at Washington State University, showed how Christian engineers can help others ponder the implications of where to locate new industry. Learning how to avoid creating "brownfields," and destroying "greenfields" are among the challenges facing industrial ecology in the next century.

John R. Wood is a Fellow in the ASA and is associate professor of biology and environmental studies at The King's University College in Edmonton, Alberta.

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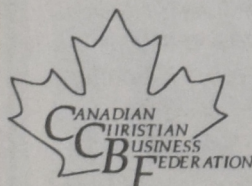


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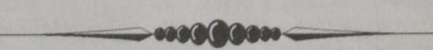


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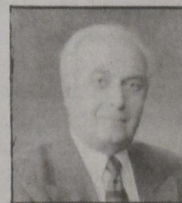
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News Comment

Nose for News



Bert Hielema

MY COLUMN CONCERNS the news. I am sorry to say that much of the news I read is not good: "good news is no news." That the sun comes up and brings life to all things isn't exactly news. But if it fails to give its full light, as it did a week ago when there was a full eclipse in parts of Europe, that's news. So much news, in fact, that when the eclipse started near the coast of Nova Scotia and migrated across the Atlantic, two Concorde jetfuls of tourists, who had paid big bucks for the privilege, tried to keep up with the eclipse, while millions in Europe danced and shrieked and went berserk clicking cameras and risking their eyesight.

For some reason the Lord made the moon 400 times smaller than the sun. But since the sun is 400 times further away, it appears to be the same size as the moon, which gives the moon the occasional chance to blot out the sun perfectly, rim to rim.

A disappearance of the sun was recounted by Herodotus 2583 years ago. The armies of Lydia and Medea, in today's Turkey, were busy bloodying each other when suddenly the sun vanished from above the battlefield, leaving a black wound in the heavens. This omen caused both sides to drop their arms and seek peace, which will not be the case between the Turks and the Kurds today under similar circumstances.

THE SUN HAS BEEN in the news in other ways. The heat wave we have endured on our continent has become universal. No official statistics are in, but I don't doubt that July 1999 will be the hottest on record.

Yet Jack Kemp argues otherwise. Kemp was the Republican vice-presidential nominee in 1996, chosen that year to counterbalance a divorced and freer-thinking Bob Dole (now the official Viagra booster on TV!). Regular churchgoer Kemp is currently "Distinguished Fellow" of the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

In testimony before Congress

last month lobbyist Kemp stated that "global warming has little to do with the environment and everything to do with a plot by international bureaucrats to seize control of the world's energy supply and indeed of our economic life."

As a typical conservative Christian, he continued: "If you believe in global warming, you are an environmentalist. If you are an environmentalist, you are against free enterprise, free trade and big business. Therefore if you believe in global warming, you are a socialist [thus basically an atheist] bent on destroying the American Way of Life, which is depending on the burning of oil, the lifeblood of the U.S. economy and the ultimate source of its universal might."

The Competitive Enterprise Institute and such lobby groups as the Coalition for Vehicle Choice and the Global Climate Information Project are, in spite of their deceptive names, nothing but business fronts which aim to swamp the media with stories about the exaggerated threats of global warming.

WHY, I WONDER, are conservative Christians in the forefront of abuse to God's creation? Has Christianity degenerated so much that it has become the very opposite of what it set out to be? And have we heard any sermons on environmental stewardship lately? Or prayers asking for forgiveness for our sins against creation?

Said a recent *New York Times* article: "We can do it. We can keep our heads buried in the increasingly hot sand until we're all as crisp as french fries. Or we can try to raise our collective consciousness and do something about global warming ... but this would require political leadership and a fair amount of willpower [and some real prayer power as well] - qualities that currently are in spectacularly short supply."

The article concluded: "We'll wait. Not enough people dying yet, and not enough property destroyed. We'll keep our heads in

the blazing hot sand until we actually feel the flames of a full-fledged catastrophe."

ON THE DAY I STARTED this column I received three pieces of mail involving the same subject: water. It coincided with my garden being so dry that some plants had shrivelled and my potatoes yielded nothing but fruits more suitable for seed potatoes than for eating. I guess there is nothing better to concentrate the mind than when things happen - or don't happen - in your own backyard. And nothing is more valuable than knowing the past - except knowing the Lord, and that, too, involves knowing history.

Let me throw out a few names: The Sumerians. The Akkadians. The Babylonians. The Assyrians. The Peruvian Chimu Empire. The Hohokam in Arizona. What did these civilizations have in common? Their irrigation systems failed. And ours are they fool-proof? (Forty per cent of the world's food comes from the 17 per cent of the world's crop lands that are irrigated.)

MAILING 1 WAS a letter from Worldwatch advertising a new book, *Pillar of Sand: Can the Irrigation Miracle Last?* The title says it; but a blurb gives detail: "It takes 1000 tons of water to grow one ton of grain."

Next I received an e-mail telling me about a congress held in St. Louis, Missouri, where 5,000 plant scientists from 100 countries were discussing the importance of plants for human survival and improved quality of life.

There, a Dr. Jane Lubchenco, who specializes in marine biology and zoology and their relation to climate change, said: "There are now some 50 'dead zones' in the world's coastal areas. The largest is the Gulf of Mexico, caused by excess nitrogen and phosphorous from the Midwest farm belt flowing down the Mississippi River."

The third item was a story in the *Christian Science Monitor*. It showed a picture of the Middle East, outlining the Nile, the Jordan, the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (all well-known biblical names situated in the cradle of civilization). Under the photo was the caption: "Control of water - even more scarce because of the current drought - will be centre-stage in efforts to jumpstart the Mideast peace process. Destroying an enemy's water and its sources has been a strategic aim in every war fought in the Middle East for the past two generations." Mark Twain remarked once: "Whiskey

is for drinking, water's for fighting about." He had a point.

A THOUGHT: "The stone age did not end because the world ran out of stones, and the oil age will not end because we run out of oil." It may end because we have run out of potable water and with it everything we need to live. And here I can outline another dire prediction, but I think that, if you are still with me, you may have gotten the point. By the way: Canada has the purest and cheapest water in the world.

THERE'S A RELIGIOUS movement in China which the government is finding to be an irritant: Falung Gong. It was created by a Mr Li Hongzhi in 1992, and in seven years has succeeded in gaining millions of followers. Some reports say that there are 70 million adherents in China alone, and 30 million elsewhere. Despite a hostile climate, Christianity is making substantial inroads into China, but apparently not so successfully as Falung Gong. The latter mixes elements from the meditative traditions of Buddhism and Taoism with the breathing techniques and shadow-boxing routines of traditional Chinese martial-arts disciplines.

The Chinese government has now outlawed the movement and arrested many leaders because it

teaches that "the doom of China's current regime at the hands of evil modern science and rampant immorality, is at hand. Truth, benevolence and forbearance are what matter."

Followers practise their exercises early at dawn in the parks. Last year, when I was at the General (Presbyterian) Assembly in Windsor, Ontario, on my early-morning run along the river each day, I saw the same persons of Asian descent doing mysterious exercises, and at the time wondered what they were doing. Now I know.

Mr. Li has evidently discovered a way to tap a particular spiritual need. Perhaps we Christians should be a bit more open-minded about our teaching, and look at better ways to reach the 50 per cent of humanity living in Asia who have a totally different tradition and history than we rational Westerners do.

The *Global Intelligence Report* I read thinks that the Chinese authorities have reacted so strongly to this peaceful movement because there is currently a severe depression in China, and all revolutions there have started peacefully during bad economic times. Keep an eye on China.

Bert Hielema is a retired insurance adjuster and all-around environmentalist who lives in Tweed, Ontario.

The Niagara Christian Education Foundation

The Niagara Christian Education Foundation, a new foundation for the purpose of financially assisting member Christian schools in the Niagara Peninsula, is searching for a full time Development Director.

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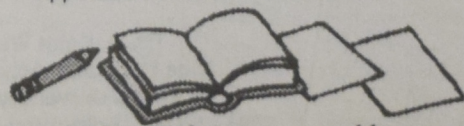
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	<p>60 years</p> <p>Hamilton Ont. Brampton Ont. 1939 August 27 1999</p> <p>With thankfulness and praise to God for his continued faithfulness in blessing our parents and grandparents, JOHN & CATHERINE RUPKE we are pleased to announce their 60th anniversary on August 27, 1999. Jack & Margo - Springdale Gerry & Helen - Newmarket Peter & Gerry - Oshawa Dave & Nancy - Bondhead Linda & Pete Weening - Samia Joyce Belcourt - Springdale Chris - Beaverton Billy - with the Lord Steve & Pauline - Orillia 30 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren Thank you, Mom and Dad, for all your love and prayers and for your Christian example to us! We pray for joy and many blessings for you in the years to come. Correspondence address: Covenant Tower PH 05, Holland Chr. Homes, 7900 McLaughlin Rd., Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7</p>		<p>1959 September 12 1999</p> <p>With thankfulness to God for his faithfulness, we celebrate the "Gift" of life and love with our parents and grandparents, JOHN & JOHANNA SMIT (nee SCHAKELAAR) on the occasion of their 40th wedding anniversary Sept. 12, 1999. We pray that the Lord will continue to bless you. With all our love and congratulations from your family: Grace & John VanHuizen - St. Catharines, Ont. Daniel, Rebecca Brian & Terry Smit - Claremont, Ont. Amanda, Charissa, Erica Margaret & Len Climenhage - St. Catharines, Ont. Jason, Michael, James "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matt. 6:33) There will be an open house on Sat., Sept. 11, 1999, from 1 - 3 p.m. at Margaret & Len's, 98 Bula Dr., St. Catharines, Ont., 905-934-6146. Best wishes only, please. Home address: 275 Pelham Rd., Unit 9, St. Catharines, ON L2S 3B9</p>
	<p>60 years</p> <p>Brampton Ont. Grimsby Ont. 1959 September 5 1999</p> <p>With praise and honor to God, we announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents, HARRY & HENNY VANDERWINDT (nee BOUWERS) Congratulations, Mom and Dad, Opa and Oma, on your 40 years of marriage. Through your love, devotion and commitment to each other you have given us a foundation from which to raise our families: Ed & Karen - Ancaster, Ont. Matthew, Kathryn, David, Benjamin Deborah Caroline (deceased 1961) Robert Peter (deceased 1962) John & Renee - Bellflower, Calif. Philip, Rachel Mike & Judy - Stoney Creek, Ont. Nicole Everyone is invited to an open house in their honor from 2 - 4 p.m., Sept. 18, 1999, at the Fruitland CRC on Hwy. 8, Stoney Creek, Ont. Best wishes only. "Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him and he will do this." (Psalm 37:5)</p>		<p>Weddings</p> <p>Romans 8:38-39 RUTH HOUTMAN and RON ALKEMA together with their parents Harry & Tine Houtman of Toronto and Tom & Frances Alkema of Willowdale are happy to announce our upcoming wedding. The ceremony will take place, D.V. September 18, 1999, at 3:30 p.m. at First CRC, Toronto. Address: 10A Bloomfield Ave., Toronto, ON M4L 2G3</p>
	<p>Anniversaries</p> <p>Trenton Ont. Brampton Ont. 1959 August 1 1999</p> <p>With family and friends in Canada and the Netherlands, we celebrated the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents, JOHN & TINEKE LUTGENDORFF (nee VRIELING) Thank you, Mom and Dad, Oma and Opa for your love and support and generosity. We praise God for His many blessings. With love, Lawrence & Wilma (Bakker) - Kingston John, Jennifer Marilyn - Brampton "Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." (2 Cor. 13:11) Correspondence: 403 - 310 Mill St. S., Brampton, ON L6Y 3B1</p>		<p>Announcements</p> <p>Allan & Maria Smedes are pleased and happy to inform you that their daughter, SOPHIA ELISABETH SMEDES was joined in marriage to CHRIS BRUCE HOFFMAN on July 31, 1999, in Petawawa, Ont. and then on August 3, 1999, they became first time grandparents through the early but safe arrival of ZACHARY RIEMER BOUMA infant son, born to Diana & Franklin Bouma in Belleville, Ont. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." Address: 505 - 130 Wright Cres., Kingston, ON K7L 5R1</p>
	<p>Births</p> <p>Praising God with joy and thanksgiving for he has given us a precious treasure. JORDAN GERRIT (DREISE) was born on July 29, 1999, weighing 6 lbs. 6 oz. Proud parents are Jon & Sharon Dreise of R.R. 1, Fordwich, Ont. A little brother for Amanda and Philip. A new grandchild for Gerit & Trudy Borg of Gorrie, Ont., and Rev. Albert & Alida Dreise of Dundas, Ont. A new great-grandchild for Mrs. Anje Dreise of Chatham, Ont.</p>		<p>Job Opportunities</p> <p>The First Christian Reformed Church of Guelph, Ont., seeks a part-time administrative, secretary. Your competencies include excellent oral and written communication skills, good public relations skills and advanced skills in Microsoft Word 97 and Quick Books. Please send resume to: First Christian Reformed Church Attention: Personnel Committee 287 Water St. Guelph, ON N1G 1B6</p>
	<p>Births</p> <p>We give thanks to God for the birth of our third child, a daughter, SAMANTHA JOY at 8 lbs 9 oz. on July 18, 1999. Proud parents are David & Kim Hanemaayer. Little sister to Teresa and Brandon. Grandparents Bert & Agnes Hanemaayer Stuart & Catharine Oosterhuis Correspondence: R.R. 4, Bradford, ON L3Z 2A6</p>		<p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>For rent: Bungalow in north end of St. Catharines, Ont. Available September 1. Three bedrooms, with finished basement, enclosed yard. \$800. plus utilities. Call 905-685-8699.</p> <p>The Seafarers Centre in Montreal, Quebec has an e-mail change. The new address is: seafarer@colba.net</p>
	<p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>New Organ CD Release "Glory to His Holy Name" performed by Dr. John Vandertuin \$15 + \$2 mailing fee to: 8 Olivetree Road, Apt. 503 Brantford, ON N3R 5Z2 519-752-5498</p>		

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Classifieds

Obituaries		Obituaries		
<p>Appingedam the Neth. Goderich Ont. "I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope." (Ps. 130:5) The Lord took unto himself on July 25, 1999, in his 74th year: JOHN VAN NIEJENHUIS Beloved husband of Grace (nee Talsma). Dear father and Opa of: John & Margaret (nee VanTol) - Windsor, Ont. Michael, Lauren John & Louis Deelstra - Wyoming, Ont. Gratiana, Osanna, Loreen, Sacha, O.J., Nathaniel, Daniel, Andrew Grace - Drayton, Ont. Sylvia & John Eelman - Wingham, Ont. Jonathan, Rosemarie, Christopher, Erica, David, Matthew Annette - Port McNeill, B.C. William & Nancy (nee DeBruin) - Newtonville, Ont. Justin, Colin, Graeme David - Dungannon, Ont. Gerald & fiancée Jacqui Dawson - Dungannon, Ont. Harold - Winnipeg, Man. Predeceased by two children: Tena (1959-1977) Clarence (1957-1991) Funeral service was held at Trinity Christian Reformed Church in Goderich, Ont. on July 28, 1999. Home address: 114 Newgate St., Goderich, ON N7A 1P4</p>	<p>Berlikum, Fr. Brampton Ont. Feb. 16, 1911 - Aug. 1, 1999 Forty-five years, to the day, after her arrival in Canada with her family, the Lord took to her eternal home. Heit's beloved wife, and our dear Mother, FOKJE (FLORENCE) VEENSTRA (nee VAN DER GRAAF) at the age of 88 years, after 61 years of faithful marriage to Pieter Veenstra who survives her. Also survived by her sisters Tina, and Alie, in the Netherlands, and brother John and sister-in-law Anneke, in British Columbia. She was loved by her children and son- and daughters-in-law, : Ted & Tina Veenstra - Cambridge, Ont. Dorothy & Rien Keyzer - Zeist, the Neth. John & Lise Veenstra - Mississauga, Ont. Jack Veenstra - Carthage, Tenn. Fred & Hazel Veenstra - Owen Sound, Ont. Bill & Lucy Veenstra - Maple Ridge, B.C. Ike Veenstra (Blaak) - Kitchener, Ont. along with 39 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. She was interred in the Meadowvale Cemetery, Brampton, Ont., August 4, 1999, and a memorial service was held in Harmony Hall, Holland Christian Homes, led by Rev. H. Praamsma. Correspondence address: Mr. Pieter Veenstra, Apt. 116, Trinity Towers, Holland Chr. Homes, 7900 McLaughlin Rd., Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7.</p>	<p>Re: Bauke Lodewyk Obituary - CC 7/26 issue. Correspondence address: Catharina Lodewyk, 57-21164 88" Ave., Langley, BC V1M 2E9.</p> <p>Dokkum Samia the Neth. Ont. "And the God of love and peace will be with you." (2 Cor. 13:11b) SIETSKE DAM (nee PRANGER) was called to her heavenly home on Friday, July 30, 1999, at the age of 68 years. Beloved wife of Taeke Dam. Dear mother of: Peter & Bonnie - Midland, Mich. Allan - Kitchener, Ont. John & Cathy - Samia, Ont. Trish & Fred Wassink - London, Ont. Sharon - Kitchener, Ont. Beloved grandmother of: Darryl, Amanda James, Kelly, Kristen John, Jodi, Jim, Jennifer Nathan, Jenda, Jori, Andrea Her wonderful zest for life and sense of humor will be sadly missed by family and friends. A funeral service was held at Second CRC, Samia, Ont. on August 3. Rev. A. Dejager officiated. Correspondence address: T. W. Dam, 1164 Murphy Rd., Samia, ON N7S 2Y5</p>	<p>ANTONIA JOHANNA SLOOTWEG (nee VERMEULEN) received peace on July 24, 1999. The Lord in his infinite wisdom took to himself our wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. We remember her and give thanks for the many years God has given her. Through the memories, joys and sorrows she experienced, her life was an example of faith and courage. While we feel the pain of her absence, we are encouraged by the fact that she was more than ready to go home to her Lord. Dear wife of Peter Slootweg - Selkirk, Ont. Dear mother of: Gerald & Ann Slootweg - Mount Hope, Ont. Jackie Martin - Hagersville, Ont. Dear grandmother of: Pam & Ken Hessels (Brendan) Peter & Kristine Slootweg Kim & Jeff Miedema (Victoria, Dylan) Jaret Slootweg Correspondence address: Peter Slootweg, R. R. 1, Selkirk, ON N0A 1P0</p>	<p>"And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him and who have been called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28) Suddenly taken to be with his Lord and Savior, on Tuesday, July 27, 1999, in Lethbridge, Alta., HENDRIK "HENK" BRAAK at the age of 68 years, beloved husband of Pauline Braak. Henk was a faithful member of the Maranatha Christian Reformed Church. Besides his loving wife Pauline, Henk is survived by two daughters, Betty (Mark) Bandstra and Hermina (Gerald) Vanderkwaak, both of Smithers, B.C.; four sons Corry (Cindy) of Orlando, Florida, Sid (Debra) of Calgary, Alta., Pete of Lethbridge, Alta., and John (Marlene) Braak of Lethbridge, Alta., and 14 grandchildren. Correspondence address: Pauline Braak, 4405-4th Ave. S., Lethbridge, AB T1J 4B3</p>
		<p>You're reading someone else's copy of Christian Courier?</p> <p>Congratulations! You certainly know how to pick worthwhile reading material! But ... You really should be reading your OWN copy. A call to us is toll-free: 1-800-969-4838 No excuse <i>now</i>.</p>		
<p>"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." (Ps. 46:1) Our Lord took home, peacefully at Huronview Home, Clinton, Ont., on July 23, 1999, JANNA (DINA) VAN OENEN (nee SIMMELINK) formerly of Goderich, Ont., in her 89th year. Beloved wife of Andries Van Oenen and dear mother of the late Gerrit Jan Van Oenen (1980). Dear mother-in-law of Winnie Paauf and grandmother of Matthew Van Oenen Paauf of Fremont, Calif. Dear sister of Sina Onnink of Winterswijk, the Neth. Also survived by several nephews and nieces. Predeceased by the late Mina Van Oenen of Goderich, Ont. and the late Ann Klomps of Clinton, Ont., and 3 brothers in the Netherlands. The funeral service was held at the Bluewater Funeral Chapel in Goderich, Ont. on Monday, July 26, 1999, with Rev. Jack Quartel of the Trinity Christian Reformed Church of Goderich officiating. Correspondence address: Mrs. Grace Lubbers, Box 21, Auburn, ON N0M 1E0</p>		<p>"The Lord is good and his love endures forever. His faithfulness continues through all generations." (Ps. 100:5) The Lord called his faithful servant KLARA VERBURG (nee TIBBEN) home on Wednesday, August 4, 1999, at the age of 91. Beloved wife of Marten Verburg of Iroquois. Dear mother of: Joyce & Bert Bosman - Saskatoon, Sask. Ann & Jerry Doppenberg - Yarrow, B.C. Lena & Joe Vandenakerboom - Rocky Mountain House, Alta. Nick & Jackie Verburg - Athens, Ont. Hama & Len Verbruggen - St. Catharines, Ont. Henry & Minny Verburg - Belleville, Ont. Jenny DeVries - Brampton, Ont. Wilma & Ben Bronsema - Bowmanville, Ont. Marten & Susan Verburg - Iroquois, Ont. Predeceased by one sister and three brothers. Sadly missed by 33 grandchildren and 52 great-grandchildren. Also survived by many nieces and nephews. A memorial service was held at the Community Christian Reformed Church, Dixon's Corners, Ont., on Friday, August 6, 1999, at 2 p.m. Address: Mr. Marten Verburg, Sr., 17 Church Ave., Iroquois, ON K0E 1K0</p>		
<p>Church News</p> <p>Christian Reformed Church</p> <p>The Covenant Christian Reformed Church in Woodstock, Ont. has a new clerk: Mr. William Bameveld, R.R. 1, Woodstock, ON N4S 7V6. Phone: 519-456-1727, Fax: 519-539-1893.</p>				

<p>Timothy Christian School in Barrie, Ontario seeks a full-time Principal/Administrator beginning August, 2000.</p> <p>We are looking for a progressive, faith-filled motivator who loves the Lord and has a passion for Christian Education. Timothy Christian School is a thriving school with 250 students, 17 teachers and a strong interdenominational flavor.</p> <p>Please direct inquiries, resume, statement of faith and philosophy of education to: Jake Veenstra 2284 Highway 26 Minesing, Ontario L0L 1Y0 Phone: (705)722-8179 Application deadline: October 19, 1999</p>  <p>"Equipping children to love, serve and honour the Lord through a sound, Christ-centred education."</p>
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Classifieds

Executive Director

- ❖ Membership development, policy position development, advocacy and research.
- ❖ Must be willing to promote a Christian perspective on agricultural issues.
- ❖ See website for a detailed job description: www.web.net/~earthkpg/



Send resume and inquiries before Friday, Aug. 29, 1999, to:

Earthkeeping:

Food and Agriculture in Christian Perspective
#205, 10711 - 107 Ave., Edmonton, AB T5H 0W6
fax: 780-428-1581 phone: 780-428-6981



COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT

The CRCNA is seeking a part-time communications assistant in Burlington, Ont. This position requires graphic design and layout skills. Web creation skills an asset. Please send resume and letter of interest by Aug. 31, 1999, to:

Director of Personnel,
Christian Reformed Church in
North America,
P.O. Box 5075 STN LCD1,
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8
905-336-2920
fax 905-336-8344
email: colemann@crcna.org



Needed: Persons interested in teaching in China for one year.

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Job requirements: a 10-month teaching contract for 20 hours of instruction per week. Start this September.

No kidding: contact Wybe Bylsma immediately at 905-372-1551 or wybe@eagle.ca



Covenant Christian Reformed Church

in St. Catharines, Ontario,
is seeking to fill the position of

MINISTRY DIRECTOR

on a temporary basis for the coming year.

Our needs include the youth program, outreach, the church education program and possibly some pastoral work. We are willing to consider a full-time appointment or one or more part-time appointments to meet all aspects of our ministry needs.

For more information or to indicate an interest
please contact Covenant CRC or call Geurt Vanden Dool
298 Parnell Rd., St. at 905-562-3410
Catharines, ON or Steve Collins
L2M 7W7 at 905-935-3989.

Application deadline is August 15, 1999.

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The goal of the youth ministry at Maranatha Christian Reformed Church in Cambridge, Ontario, Canada is to help our youth grow in Christian faith, knowledge, fellowship and service to others.

Our congregation is prayerfully seeking a non-ordained

Youth Director
to build upon our existing youth programs.

This is a half-time position. If you enjoy spending time with young people, please reply in writing and in confidence by September 7, 1999 (include a brief statement of personal faith with your application) to:

Youth Director Search Committee
Maranatha Christian Reformed Church
c/o Dave McDonald

380 Dundas St. S., RR 1

Cambridge, ON N1R 5R2 Canada
519-621-3731

A detailed job description is available
by calling the above telephone number
or fax 519-621-4623
or e-mail daveannmcd@golden.net



THE KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

a Christian liberal arts college offering 3- and 4- year B.A. and B.Sc. degrees and a 2-year, after-degree B.Ed. is inviting applications from women and men for a full-time, tenure-track vacancy in

BIOLOGY

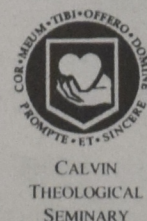
The successful candidate must be able to teach courses in Introductory Biology, Genetics, Molecular Cell Biology, or Vertebrate Physiology and one or more of the following: Microbiology, Vertebrate Zoology, Human Anatomy and Physiology (non-majors), and Ethology. Supervision of senior research projects will also be required. The successful candidate will join a department in which biology is taught from a historical and theoretical perspective that emphasizes foundational and ethical commitments and that challenges students to develop a stewardship perspective. An interest in the relationship between biology and other academic disciplines is an asset. The successful candidate must demonstrate graduate level course work in areas of teaching.

A Ph.D. is required for tenure track appointment as well as commitment to the College's Christian Statement of Faith. Starting date: July 1, 2000. Deadline: October 22, 1999 or when filled.

The King's University College is an equal opportunity employer, but in accordance with Canadian employment and immigration regulations, this advertisement is directed to first to Canadian citizens and permanent residents. Qualified female and male candidates, including visible minorities are encouraged to apply.

Starting salary: \$37,000 and up with generous benefit package. Send application letter, curriculum vitae, copies of transcripts, and three letters of reference to:

Dr. S. Keith Ward
Vice President Academic,
The King's University College
9125 - 50 St., Edmonton, AB, T6B 2H3



Calvin Seminary Opening

The Calvin Theological Seminary
Board of Trustees
recently declared a vacancy in the field of
DOMESTIC MISSIOLOGY.

Persons should have advanced training and experience in evangelism, church planting, new church development, or other areas related to spreading the gospel and building the church in North America.

A position description is available from the seminary president, to whom all correspondence should be directed at 3233 Burton Street, S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49546 USA, fax 616-957-8621. Inquiries will be received until September 30, 1999.

Events/Classifieds

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per line inch, per insertion.

- Sept. 12** Dutch Service, Rev. Henry DeBolster, Ancaster CRC, Hwy. 53, **Ancaster**, Ont., 3 p.m. (#)
- Sept. 25** 40th Anniversary of John Knox Christian School, Woodstock, Ont. Service of Thanksgiving at 2 p.m. in the Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, Hwy. 59 & 401, **Woodstock**, Ont. Open house at the school after the service.
- Oct. 16** A day of encouragement and training for deacons, elders and other caregivers at Hamilton District Christian High School in **Ancaster**, Ont. Theme: "Refreshing our hope!" Featuring 54 workshops including special sessions for elders and caregivers. Cost: \$40. Contact your deacons for a registration form, or call Diaconal Ministries at 905-646-4511.
- Oct. 31** Dutch Service, Rev. Jerry Hoytema, Ancaster CRC, Hwy. 53, **Ancaster**, Ont., 3 p.m. (#)

John Knox Christian School

800 Juliana Drive,
Woodstock, ON N4S 7W8
will be

"Celebrating God's Faithfulness"

to us in the past 40 years – 1959 - 1999,
on September 25, 1999 D.V.

with a Service of Thanksgiving
at 2 p.m. in the

Maranatha Christian Reformed Church,
Hwy. 59 & 401, Woodstock.

Our guest speaker will be

Dan VanderArk,

Executive Director of

Christian Schools International.

The service will be followed by an

Open House

at John Knox Christian School.

All former students, teachers, board

members, parents and friends of

John Knox Christian School

are invited to join us in this celebration.

519-539-1492

johnknox@execulink.com



The Living Word

Sermons for reading services.

Contact:

R. Vander Ploeg Secr./Treas.
37 Brick Pond Lane
Woodstock, ON N4V 1G1
Phone: (519) 539-2117

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(616) 531-4046/res.

Students coming to London to study at
the University of Western Ontario
and Fanshawe College:



Welcome!

Student Welcome Service:
First CRC, Talbot and Dufferin

Sunday, September 12, 10 a.m.

Cornerstone Student Fellowship:

Wednesday evenings

Student Retreat:

October 1-3

Inter-Varsity

Graduate Student Fellowship

Call or e-mail for more info:
Michael Veenema 519-438-
1242 mveenema@julian.uwo.ca

You are cordially invited to help us celebrate
God's faithfulness on the

50th Anniversary of

Maranatha Christian Reformed Church

Woodstock, Ontario

September 4, 1999

Open House @ 3:00 p.m.

at the church

DINNER and PROGRAM @ 6:00 p.m.

at John Knox Christian School

To reserve a seat at the dinner
call Ann Henry @ 519-421-0156

Dinner tickets – \$13.00/person, \$25.00 per couple

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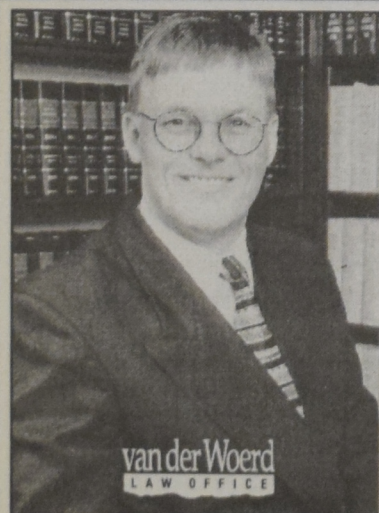
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Merger
Announcement

The partners of Ross & McBride are pleased to announce the merger of the David A. van der Woerd practice with Ross & McBride, under the continuing name of Ross & McBride. Building on a tradition that spans more than a century, Ross & McBride provides personal yet professional service in a wide variety of contemporary legal disciplines.

The merger will enhance the personal attention David provides to his clients and will broaden the scope of the services available to them.

Now in his tenth year in the practice of law, David will continue to focus on corporate and commercial law, real estate, wills and estate planning, and charitable law.



Commerce Place, 1 King Street West
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Email: dvanderwoerd@rossmcbride.com
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The Georgetown Christian Reformed Church invites applications for
A full-time Church Education Director
to provide coordination, direction and leadership for our church
education program which spans all ages.

Applicants must demonstrate a sound Reformed world and life view and have good organizational ability. A strong background in Christian education and membership in the Christian Reformed Church is a prerequisite. Full job description available upon request. **Please direct inquiries and resumes to:** Georgetown Christian Reformed Church PO Box 45 Georgetown, ON L7G 4T1 or e-mail: hww@aztec-net.com

News

CHP head blasts Saskatchewan 'human wrongs' tribunal over school prayer

Gray compares province to China

Marian Van Til

WELLAND, Ont. — Ron Gray, head of the right-wing Christian Heritage Party (CHP) likens what is going on in Saskatchewan with what's happening in China, religiously speaking. In a recent opinion piece which the party sends out to its faithful across Canada, Gray asks, only partially rhetorically, whether there is "any significant difference between the Communist Chinese crackdown on the Falung Gong and the Saskatchewan Human Rights Tribunal's crackdown on school prayer?"

"Well, of course, there are differences," he says sardonically, "the Chinese oppression of Falung Gong is, according to respected international observers, designed to divert attention from the crumbling state of the economy; whereas Saskatchewan enjoys one of the lower unemployment rates in Canada. Of course, one reason for that could be the fact that Saskatchewan's number three export — after wheat and potash — is unemployed workers, mostly heading for the boom in Alberta."

'Dangerously religious'

Gray continues: "It's true that the Chinese really are worried about the growth of religion in their officially atheist state — Falung Gong claims 70 million members inside China and 30 million outside — but there are reportedly more than 100 million subterranean Christians meeting in house churches. And a recent survey by the Science Ministry in China reported 70 per cent of people, including 55 per cent of Communist Party members,



Gray says: "It's true that the Chinese really are worried about the growth of religion in their officially atheist state ... there are reportedly more than 100 million subterranean Christians meeting in house churches."

are religious."

"Saskatchewan is probably even more dangerously religious," he notes, "about 80 per cent Christian — but not likely including 55 per cent of the ruling NDP."

Gray says it's ironic that in the birthplace of the NDP — which started as the CCF by Christian social activists — the party-appointed Human Rights Tribunal (which he calls the "Human Wrongs Tribunal") has ruled "that children cannot pray in school, a right that was guaranteed when the province entered Confederation in 1905."

Gray asserts that "in the 1990s, the rights of a whole province can be voided by a single complainant taking her hurt feelings before an unelected, unrepresentative, anti-religious Kangaroo Court."

He concludes: "Welcome to Canada. If you're a Christian, please check your beliefs at the border. You'd be better off joining Falung Gong."

Motorcycle rally nets 'loot for a decent cause'

SASKATOON, Sask. (MCC) — Rick Epp recently hopped on his '69 BSA motorcycle to help raise \$1,200 for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Saskatchewan. Epp, from Hague, Saskatchewan, and his friend Ed Olfert, pastor of Grace Mennonite Church in Prince Albert, organized the one-day motorcycle rally.

Epp said it was a great way to meet other avid motorcyclists while endorsing MCC's work. "It netted some loot for some decent causes," he said.

The 17 bikers each paid \$50 to join the ride, while passengers

chipped in \$25. T-shirts and food for the participants were donated. The riders hit the highway on May 29, driving from Saskatoon approximately 135 km north to Prince Albert, before heading back to a campground just south of Saskatoon for an evening wind-up.

A few days later Epp and Olfert roared into MCC Saskatchewan's relief sale on their bikes to whip up enthusiasm for a similar rally next year. "I think that next year will be significantly bigger because a lot of people really like the idea," said Bill Ginther, who directs fundraising for MCC Saskatchewan.

News Digest

'Green' bullet good for environment

ALASKA — The U.S. Army has developed an environmentally friendly bullet that will still maim and kill, but it won't poison the environment by spreading lead. The so-called "green bullets" have tungsten cores instead of lead, reports the *Globe and Mail*. Soldiers have used lead shot to kill each other since the 1400s, and the potential switch to tungsten would be a significant technical change in military ammunition.

The new bullet was tested last year by the Alaska Army National Guard, and a U.S. Army report says there was no difference in "performance" between tungsten and lead.

Gay fundamentalists start Bible school

CEDAR GROVE, Fla. (AP) — Grace Institute Bible College and Seminary is conservative, fundamental and evangelical. But most of its students and faculty are homosexuals. The institute's founder, Rev. Jerry Stephenson, insists that being a gay or lesbian fundamentalist is not a contradiction in terms. Stephenson, 42, was a Southern Baptist minister for 15 years, all the time struggling with his sexual orientation. He left the Southern Baptists in 1990 and last year opened Grace Institute so homosexuals could openly earn degrees in biblical studies, Christian counselling or music.

"There were no conservative, fundamental schools out there that would take us unless we hid in the closet," said Stephenson. "We believe in the Adam and Eve story. We also believe in the Adam and Steve story."

Magic mushroom home delivery

ZUTPHEN, Neth. — A "natural drug store" in this small Dutch town is offering home delivery of mushrooms ... but they're not on a pizza. Dr. Paddo, the Natural Drug Store, run by owner Alex Krassenberg, now delivers organic "designer drugs" and hallucinogenic substances such as psychedelic mushrooms to users' homes.

Law enforcement authorities in the Netherlands — where marijuana and hashish, though technically illegal, are sold in small amounts without fear of prosecution — are taking a mellow approach. Dutch law doesn't prohibit the sale or use of the drugs sold by Krassenberg, reports the *Toronto Star*.

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September 6, 1999

DRESS TALKS:

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